15 April 1983 65p IR£1.00 US$1.50 By Air

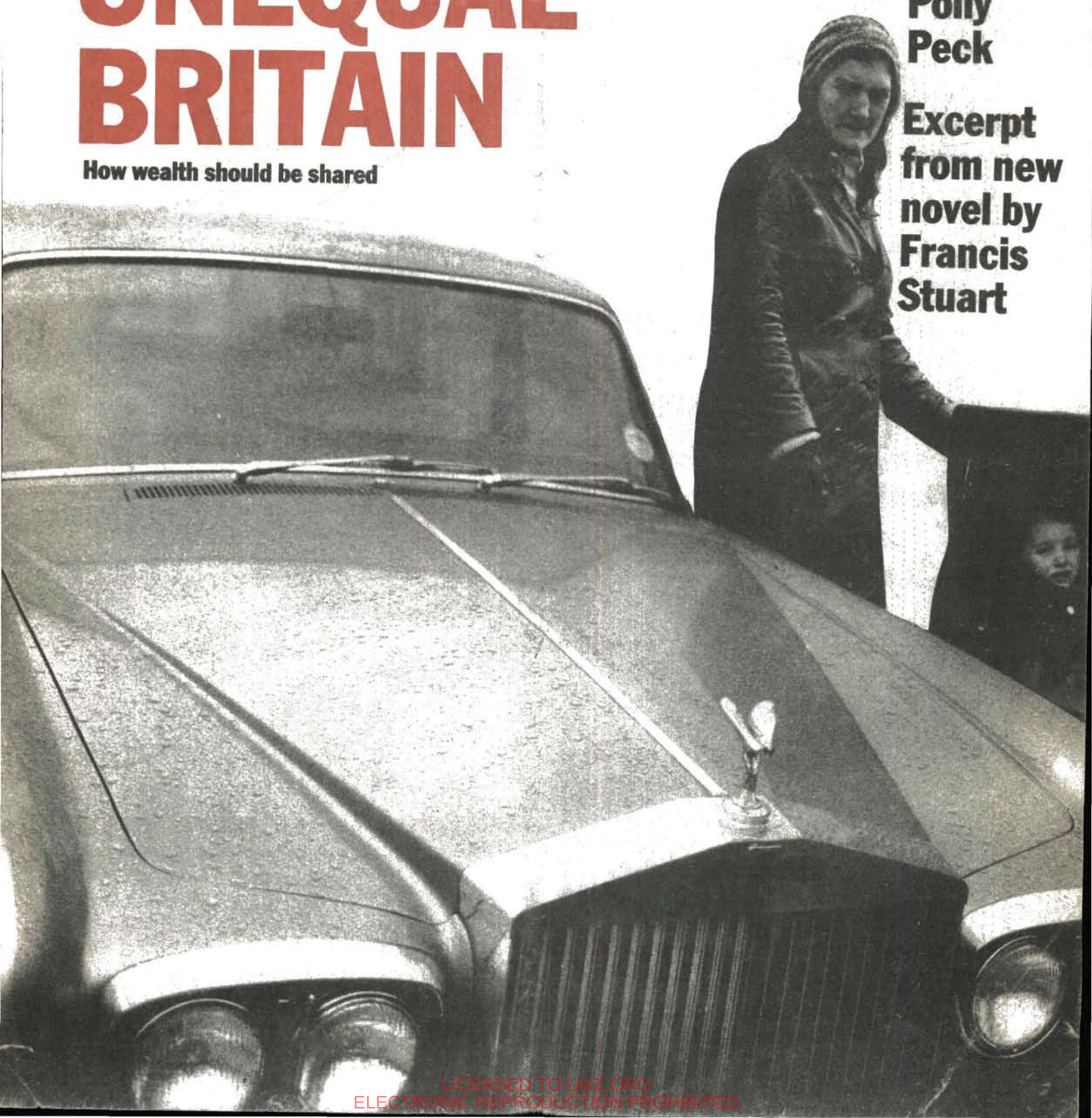
New Statesman

UNEQUAL BRITAIN

How wealth should be shared

Rise and fall of Polly Peck

Excerpt from new novel by Francis Stuart



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New Statesman

New Statesman
14-16 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU
Tel: 01-253 2001
Editorial: 01-253 2003
Telex: 28449
Cables: Newstat, London EC1
©1983 Statesman & Nation Publishing Company Ltd and contributors
Published and distributed by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Company Ltd

Subscriptions: Lesley Bridgmount, Cecilia Papadopoulos
Circulation: Liz Cooper, Tim Freeman
Display advertisements: Michael Roberts 01-253 2001
Classified advertisements: Laura Berryman, Stephen Mitchell 01-251 5487

Subscription Rates
Surface mail:
UK £29, Overseas £32
Air mail:
Europe £36, Middle East £39, Africa, India, South America £40, Australasia, Far East £45, USA $79, Canada $92

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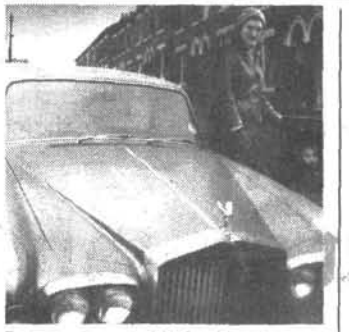
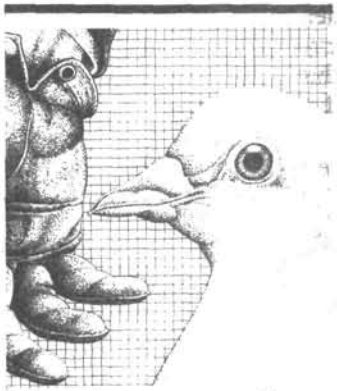


Cover montage: Michael Bennett

Unequal Britain

In search of the ever-elusive goal of equality, should we announce the acceptable limits of wealth and poverty, asks A. B. Atkinson. p.12

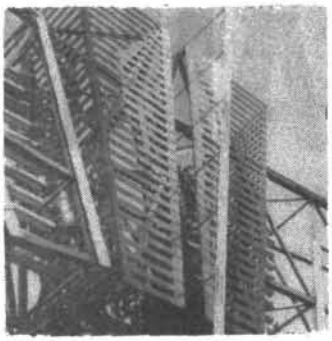


Excerpt from a new novel

by Francis Stuart, author of *Black List Section H* p.22

Unlicensed casino

Following the crash of Polly Peck, David Philip explains the speculative workings of trading shares of small companies p.12

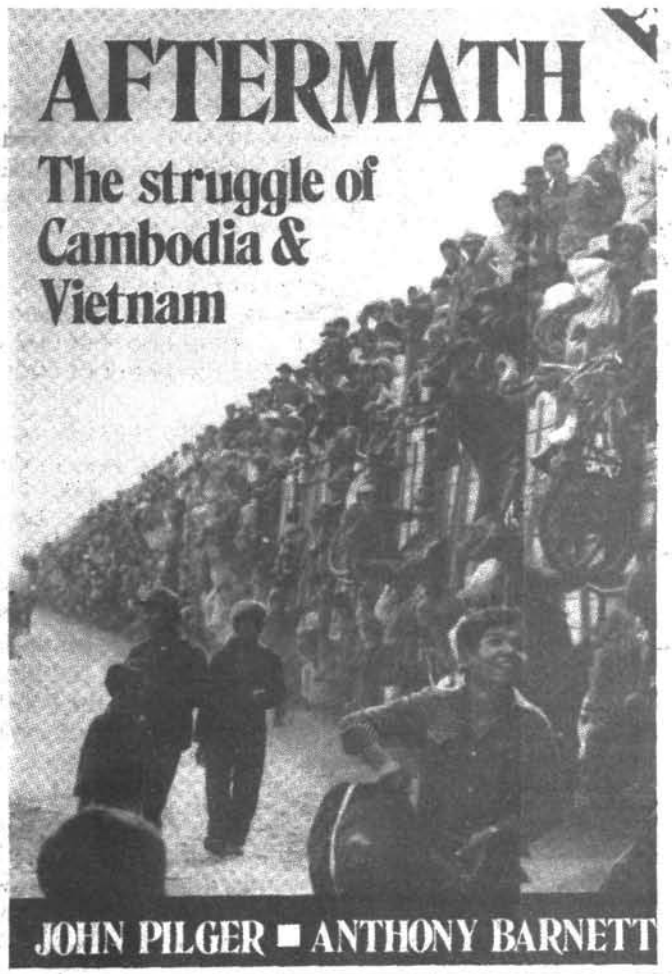


High Dec

Jules Lubbock on the new TV-AM building p.28

News: Scottish police; conservation; Afia Begum; West Midlands industry; minibuses pp.4-6
Peter Kellner: making voters marginal p.7
John McIlroy: Free trade zones p.11
Naomi Wayne: Equal value at work p.14
Diary: Christopher Price p.15
Roger Woddis p.15
Tony Paterson: West German census p.16
Jonathan Mirsky: Chinese illiteracy p.16
Issam Sartawi: last interview p.17
Amanda Mitchison: Copts go in fear p.18
Alan George: West Bank leagues p.18
This England p.19
Bretécher p.20
Letters p.21
Harriett Gilbert: Fiction 1 p.24
Shorter Reviews p.25
John Spurling: Fiction 2 p.26
Michael Heffernan: Camp p.26
Michael Hofmann: Brecht p.27
John Spurling: Art p.29
John Coleman: Films p.30
Hugo Williams: Television p.31
Benedict Nightingale: Theatre p.32
Weekend Competition p.32
Kathy O'Shaughnessy: First Person p.33
Crossword p.33
Listings p.35

AFTERMATH
The struggle of Cambodia & Vietnam



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LOCAL ELECTIONS

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Where does the money come from?
Is Whitehall taking over at your Town Hall?

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New Statesman Vol 105 No 2717 15 April 1983

Policing without accountability

ON TUESDAY LAST week, after a story broke in the *Manchester Evening News*, the chief constable of Manchester, James Anderton, announced that armed police officers 'are patrolling Greater Manchester round the clock to deal with a serious escalation of armed robberies'.

Mr Anderton seems to have realised that his initial statement had not been a great success, for on the Wednesday he issued another one. In it, he described the armed patrols as 'a temporary measure', and added: 'The public are certainly not witnessing the arrival of a permanently armed police force. Hopefully, that day is still a far distant prospect.'

Two days later Mr Anderton attended a meeting of the Greater Manchester police committee, whose members were keen to question him about the episode. To their astonishment, they found themselves being blamed for the fuss of the previous few days: 'That is partly your fault, and the fault of the media to boot', he said.

But reasoned explanations have never been part of Mr Anderton's style. At the same meeting last Friday, he was asked if he could provide more information about the 'serious escalation of armed robberies' in the Manchester area which had supposedly been the justification for Mr Anderton's decision. He refused, but he did say that he would give more details when the round-the-clock armed policing had ended. When might that be? Mr Anderton could not say. Yet, at the same time, he told them angrily that his armed operation was in 'tatters and ruins' because of the publicity. If it was in tatters, why not call it off at once? Mr Anderton would not answer.

Mr Anderton is a queer fellow. As he once revealed in a *Sunday Times* interview, he is a firm believer in reincarnation and thinks that in one of his previous existences he may have been Oliver Cromwell. He also supports the abolition of a suspect's right to silence – not for the usual police reasons, but because 'we owe God an explanation. He calls on us to explain our conduct, once it's questioned'.

His policing policies are equally idiosyncratic. It is hardly surprising that they have been questioned from time to time. But Mr Anderton tends to regard such criticisms as 'part of a concentrated campaign to undermine us'. He refused, for example, to assist the county council's official inquiry into the Moss Side riots of 1980. The inquiry's report expressed the plaintive hope that Mr Anderton 'will accept that not everybody who makes suggestions for the improvement of the police force is a subversive', but there is little evidence that he has accepted anything of the sort.

FOLLOWING THE SHOOTING of Stephen Waldorf in London in January, William Whitelaw tried to still public disquiet by publishing the 'guidelines' which supposedly governed the Metropolitan Police's use of firearms. On 22 March he followed this up by sending comprehensive guidelines on the same subject to every police force. They stated unambiguously that firearms should be issued to police 'only where there is reason to suppose that a police officer may have to face a person who is armed or otherwise so dangerous that he could not safely be restrained without the use of firearms'.

All very reassuring, as it was no doubt meant to be. But when Mr Anderton revealed last week that he had armed police driving about Manchester round the clock – in clear defiance of the guidelines – the Home Office hastened to explain that the guidelines were not binding in any way and that, in effect, chief constables could ignore them completely if they wished.

In the past, William Whitelaw has shown some signs of recognising that this lack of accountability is insupportable and dangerous. As he once put it: 'If the public are to be satisfied with the way they are policed, they must have an increasing say in how it is done.' He made it clear that he thought the locally elected police authority was the correct forum for such discussions.

Yet last week Mr Anderton treated his local police authority with total contempt. Rejecting the suggestion that, at least as a matter of good manners, he might have informed them before putting out his press releases, he is reported to have replied: 'The policies were mine, the responsibility mine and not yours.' With those words Mr Anderton was arrogantly, but correctly, stating the truth about the present constitutional position of chief constables, namely that once appointed they are in effect accountable to no one.

They are also in effect not removable. The local police authority has no power of removal by itself of any kind, despite the fact that it nominally has the political responsibility for policing in its area. Under the 1964 Police Act it may, but even then only acting with express approval of the Home Secretary, call on a chief constable to retire 'in the interests of efficiency'. It cannot call on him to retire because his policy or attitudes are entirely contrary to the wishes of the elected police authority. In any case, it is by no means clear that a chief constable who chooses to dig his heels in can be statutorily obliged to respond to such a call.

Such lack of accountability is unacceptable anywhere in a democratic society. It is quite unacceptable for those in the position of chief constables. At an intellectual level Mr Whitelaw knows this full well. But as a political level he is quite simply terrified of antagonising the police or opening himself to criticism from the baying hounds of the 'law and order' pack. During his Home Secretaryship he has given them almost everything they have asked for. It does not seem to have done him much good, as he discovereed last year when he was howled down at a London meeting of the Police Federation. Undaunted, he then set out to comply with even more of their demands, in the form of his Police and Criminal Evidence Bill.

Faced with a crisis of public confidence in the police, the Home Secretary's reaction has been to worsen that crisis by seeking to give the police further unprecedented powers without any corresponding increase in their accountability. He says that the new powers are necessary. Why are they necessary? Because the police say so. □

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Police powers in Scotland: a lesson for the UK?

AN INNOCENT traveller in the UK is now five times more likely to be detained on suspicion by police in Edinburgh than to be mugged in London. This alarming revelation about the state of law and order is contained in unpublished statistics compiled by the Scottish Office and is a consequence of new police powers introduced in Scotland in June 1981.

These powers were given to police under the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act, and are very similar to new powers of detention proposed for police in England and Wales in the Police and Criminal Justice Bill. While Whitelaw has given in to pressures from professional groups to safeguard their rights, he has so far been unmoved by protests from the powerless about the threats to their liberties.

Under the new powers, the use of detention in Scotland has increased at an annual rate of 9.6 per cent. But between 1981 and 1982 there was an increase of 38 per cent in 'voluntary declarations' – the form of questioning which the new detention powers were intended to replace. By the end of 1982, some 30 per cent of police interrogations in Scotland took place under conditions deemed irregular by the government in 1980.

Between June 1981 and December 1982, 34,257 persons were detained in Scotland by the police – one in 50 of Scots aged between 15 and 65. More than half of them were released without charge. There is considerable variation between local police forces which does not seem to have much to do with variations in crime rates. Grampian police use detention powers about twice as often as Lothian and Borders and three times as often as Strathclyde.

In fact, the comparatively low detention rate in Strathclyde (which includes Glasgow) suggests that police are failing to record detentions, or are still asking people to 'help with inquiries' at the station. For instance, Grampian's C division (Aberdeen Queen Street) alone recorded more detentions than Strathclyde's A, B, C and D divisions – Glasgow's city centre – put together. In the first six months of 1982, Strathclyde's K Division (Paisley) recorded 88 detentions compared to 388 in R Division (Ayr). During the six months from June 1982, the number of people in Strathclyde making 'voluntary declarations' in police stations outnumbered those detained (3,736 to 3,582). This is despite strict guidelines from the Crown Office to Chief Constables discouraging the holding of people to assist with inquiries.

The Scottish Criminal Justice Act allows police to hold people for six hours' interrogation without arrest, charge, or access to legal advice. (The proposed law in Britain will allow people to be held for 48 hours.) Yet the Scottish Office statistics show that 90 per cent of detentions are over within four hours and that the average length of time is 2½ hours. No evidence supports the argument that police in England and Wales need 48 hours to pursue their inquiries.

Richard Kinsey

Midlands job export

WHEN Mr John Butcher, the government's new whizz kid for West Midlands industry, gets down to work, it is to be hoped that he will study an interim report of a survey carried out by Birmingham trade union groups. For according to research by the Birmingham Trade Union Group for World Development and the Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre, West Midlands firms have been investing heavily abroad while cutting back on their workforces at home.

The expansion has been in subsidiaries in the Pacific countries, America and the EEC, an industrial 'restructuring' which has left the once-prosperous West Midlands with a regional unemployment level of nearly 16 per cent. 'The transnational corporations traditionally located in the West Midlands bear a major part of the blame for the economic crisis in the region' the interim report concludes. The full report is due out soon.

The groups studied ten of the largest private companies in the area in the years 1978-81. The figures show that over the four years the companies shed an average of 25 per cent of their workforce in the UK. This involved the loss of 129,562 jobs – equivalent to a third of the current 370,000 people unemployed in the West Midlands. Over the same period, the same companies increased their overseas workforce by nine per cent to 188,481 employees.

This investment is not entirely to the benefit of workers in developing countries, the survey maintains. Low wages, lax environmental controls and higher profits are the main attractions for British firms. At the engineering firm GKN, which got rid of nearly 26,000 jobs in Britain over the four years, while increasing its overseas workforce by 3000, a company press officer said: 'We have gone where the market is. We have had a bad recession in the UK and we have had to tailor our workforce to the demand.'

While Mr Butcher scurries around stimulating small industry, the massive job drain from the West Midlands transnational firms will continue unimpeded.

John Pearcey

Ideal peace camp

On April 4, last day of the Ideal Home Exhibition, 15 Greenham women plus a Greenham baby set up their ideal home – a peace camp – opposite the Royal Navy stand at the Earls Court Exhibition. 'We wanted to point out that even if you can afford an "ideal" home, you won't be able to defend it against a nuclear attack' said Lynn Taylor, one of the women. The Exhibition organisers requested police not to take action, and the women remained for five hours, singing anti-nuclear songs and talking to the crowd. 'We have been very pleased by the response', said Lynn.

Sue Shaw

Geoff Keyte

Widow hides from police

AFIA BEGUM, a 19-year-old Bangladeshi woman whose husband died last year in a fire in a council tenement block in Brick Lane, East London, is still in hiding from the police. Immigration authorities have ruled that her husband's death leaves her and her one-year-old daughter with no right to live there. Afia and her daughter then disappeared and police are said to be questioning people in the Brick Lane area about their whereabouts.

In January 1982, after a three year wait, Afia and her daughter were granted a visa to settle permanently in the UK. They were due to join Abdul Hamid, Afia's husband and Habib Ullah, her father, who had lived and worked in Britain for 13 and 26 years. But in March 1982, Abdul was killed and his father-in-law seriously injured in the fire which destroyed the slum tenement in which they both lived. (The building had been due for demolition since 1975.)

When Afia and her daughter arrived at Heathrow in June 1982, she was told by immigration officers that her visa for permanent settlement no longer entitled her to live in Britain because the death of her husband was a 'change in circumstances'. She was allowed in only on a temporary basis to wind up his estate. Afia appealed to the Home Secretary pointing out that not only should she be allowed to stay on in Britain in her own right but to care for her father who was seriously ill.

However, despite Afia's appeal and a vigorous campaign launched on her behalf by East London Workers Against Racism and supported by the Bangladesh Welfare Association, Bangladesh Workers Association, Tower Hamlets Trades Council, several MPs and GLC Councillors, Afia was refused permission to stay. In a letter to Ian Mikardo, her MP, David Waddington, the new Minister with special responsibility for Immigration, claimed: 'I cannot see any good reason why Mrs Hamid cannot return to . . . Bangladesh. Arrangements will now be made for her return there' and as for the care of her father 'enquiries made of Mr Habib Ullah's doctors by the Department of Health and Social Security reveal that he is fully recovered from the burns he received and although he suffers from hypertension and bronchitis he is relatively fit'. The letter was followed by a deportation order for 31 March and seats booked to Dacca on 2 April.

Amrit Wilson

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Top Conservative at heart of conservation row

COLONEL the Right Honourable Edward Dillon Lott du Cann, Conservative member of Parliament for Taunton, privy councillor, chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on the Treasury, head of the influential 1922 Committee, and director of Lonrho, is soon to lose one of his humbler titles, that of vice-president of the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation.

It is the sort of post that Tory gentlemen like to occupy, but the trust, angered by du Cann's anti-conservationist stands on several issues, asked him before Christmas to resign. Du Cann argues that he is a good conservationist and keenly interested in the work of the trust. He has agreed to attend a special council meeting to discuss the matter, but it appears likely that he will not survive the council elections in May. On 4 June last year, du Cann set out his views on conservation in a letter to the chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council, Sir Ralph Verney. In it he said 'Please do not quote me as a supporter of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. I opposed the act strongly in the previous parliament and my speeches are in Hansard. Indeed I had the responsibility for killing the bill before the election and I am very sorry that it was re-endorsed.'

Du Cann's most bitter battle with conservation has been over West Sedgemoor in the Somerset Levels. When last summer the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) designated the area as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), as it was required to by law, du Cann joined forces with another local MP, John Peyton, to try to get Michael Heseltine, and later his successor as Secretary of State for the Environment, Tom King, to overturn the decision.

West Sedgemoor is in ecological terms one of the best wetlands in the country. It supports a spectacular number and variety of wildfowl and wading birds, and has a rich flora which includes green-winged orchids. Otters still live there, though they have disappeared from almost every other part of lowland Britain. Once an area is designated an SSI farmers have to consult with the NCC before undertaking certain damaging operations, such as draining and ploughing up grazing marshes. The council is obliged to compensate farmers for any loss of potential income resulting from its objections to such operations.

Conservationists are critical of the weakness of the legal protection afforded to SSSIs, and of compensation arrangements that pit the meagrely-funded NCC against the Ministry of Agriculture, which hands out lavish subsidies for agricultural intensification regardless of its implications for ecology.

In a letter to Heseltine last November du Cann and Peyton accused the NCC of 'inconsiderate and oppressive' behaviour over West Sedgemoor, although the council had delayed designating the area for five years while it tried in vain to win the support of local farmers. In the same letter du Cann and Peyton urged Heseltine to 'set aside the council's decision', although the minister has no such power. Du Cann was successful in one respect: the chairman of the NCC, Sir Ralph Verney, who stood up to anti-conservationist forces during the West Sedgemoor saga,

The Rt Hon du Cann

was ingloriously sacked by one of the Department of the Environment's junior ministers within two months of du Cann's complaint to Heseltine that Verney had failed 'to keep his zealots and minions in check'.

Now the trust is once again preparing to oppose its own vice-president over a conservation matter. The largest remaining block of heathland on the Blackdown Hills of Devon and Somerset is the 450 acre Blackdown and Sampford Commons SSSI. In the mid-1960s the scientific interest of approximately one-third of the site was destroyed, according to the NCC, by converting it to a conifer plantation. The NCC and local press claim that du Cann and local haulier Bert Govier want to quarry sand there, on the 50 acre Sampford Moor, which they own between them. Questioned by the *New Statesman* about the SSSI, du Cann categorically denied owning any land on the Blackdown Hills or ever having applied for permission to quarry sand there. Nonetheless his agents have been in touch with the NCC about the quarrying scheme. Several years ago there was a local storm after Professor Prentice, who has acted for Du Cann in other planning applications, supervised exploratory digging for sand on the site, without planning permission. Two years ago an application was made to quarry sand on the SSSI. The application was thrown out by the district council on a technicality. But the county planning department warned the applicants that a new application must, in the words of county planning officer Ken Brown, 'contain details of the environmental impact so that the plan can be properly evaluated.' Du Cann and his partners have since hired a firm of planning consultants, Manasseh and partners, to deal with the application.

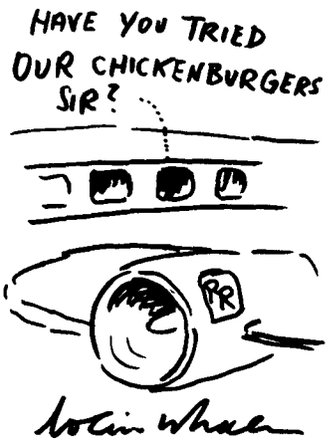
The county's planning department considers the prospect of sand quarrying on Sampford Moors significant 'because it's over a large area and as a major new area of mineral working it has long-term implications for that part of the county.' The trust intends to oppose the application because it would destroy a protected area. Somerset's Highways Department is also likely to object, or to require du Cann to foot the bill for extensive road improvements, an operation which might have extensive ecological implications of its own.

Catherine Caufield

MISCELLANY

Flying feathers

What is the connection between poultry and British Civil Airworthiness Regulations (BCAR) Part C, chapter C, paragraph 34? Rather a strong one, since you ask. The aforesaid BCAR Part C etc. is one of the many tests which a new aircraft engine has to pass before the Civil Aviation Authority will give it a licence. The test deals with 'ingestion of birds', and is in three parts. First, a single pheasant weighing four pounds is killed by gassing and then swiftly loaded into a special gun, whence it is fired, at between 300 and 400 knots, straight at the fan of a rotating engine. According to the CAA rules, if the engine 'fails' as a result of this unexpected invader, it must fail safely (i.e. not actually break up). If all is well, phase two begins: take between two dozen and four dozen starlings, kill them, and load them into the gun. These are fired at about 160 knots, to simulate a flock of small birds. If the engine continues to rotate, and does not lose more than 25 per cent of its power, it is then ready for the grand finale: kill eight ducks, weighing between one pound and two pounds each, and shoot them at 160 knots straight into the rotating fan. If the poor old engine emerges more or less intact from all the blood and feathers, it is well on its way to qualifying for a CAA certificate. Chickens are sometimes used instead of ducks, and rumour has it that some aircraft engineers recently noticed that CAA rules don't specify what the birds should be fed on. It was quickly established that the removal of grit from their diet made quite a difference: chickens fed entirely on soft foodstuffs minced up smoothly when they hit the fan, causing it very little damage. The technicians are now looking for grit-free birds; poultry farmers and feed suppliers should take note.



Whitehall farce

As you might expect, the main building of the Ministry of Defence in London is well-protected. When staff arrive, they produce a special card (the same size and shape as a credit card) which they insert into a special hole by the door. After a few seconds, if the card seems to be in order, it is spewed out again; the proud owner can then get through the full-length turnstile which keeps out unwelcome guests. However, the machine breaks down about once a week. On these occasions, the doors are kept open and staff flash their card at a receptionist before going in to do another hard day's work destabilising CND. The receptionist merely glances at the back of the card, of which the only distinguishing feature is a row of green arrows. Far be it from us to suggest that you paint green arrows on the back of your cheque card and stride casually through the main doors the next time the security machine breaks down.
On the other hand . . .

Fair shares

Two weeks ago we reported that a Peterborough firm called Baker Perkins, which makes printing machinery, had taken a £25,000 shareholding in a local private hospital called the Fitzwilliam. At the time, Baker Perkins's finance director (who is also a director of the hospital) told us that the £25,000 should be regarded not as an investment but as 'a charitable donation'; if the company lost its £25,000 it would hardly show up in the balance sheets. What mattered, he told us, was that Baker Perkins had a name in the town for giving to good causes, and supporting private medicine was a good cause.

Mark the sequel. Last week the selfsame Baker Perkins announced 100 redundancies in Peterborough. At Baker Perkins, it seems, charity ends at home.

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MP calls for inquiry into minibus operator

A LONDON MP has called for an inquiry into the 'suitability' of Anthony Shephard to run minibuses in London. Anthony Shephard is a director of the firm Associated Minibus Operators Ltd which wants to introduce four minibus routes in London.

In an adjournment debate on Tuesday night Frank Dobson, the Labour MP for St Pancras, said that the Hong Kong minibus service was rife with corruption. 'The Commission of inquiry into corruption under Sir Alistair Blair-Kerr received major allegations of corruption in the transport department . . . I must be careful what I say because the transport commissioner in Hong Kong at the time of this corruption was Anthony Shephard, now the main proponent of the AMOS scheme in Parliament.'

He said that Hong Kong urban councillor Mrs Elsie Elliott had proposed the temporary licensing of minibuses but this was 'met with derision by the commissioner of Transport.' Dobson continued to quote from her book: 'Three months later, after a trip to Japan the same commissioner announced that he had decided to legalise the minibuses not for a limited period, but as a permanent form of transport. It soon became clear that the minibuses would have to be of a standard size, supplied by one Japanese firm.'

Dobson then quoted from a 1973 article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* 'which featured the dubious career of one Cheung Sam, the Cantonese equivalent to John Doe, which exemplified what had gone on... Through his police contacts Cheung heard that nine-seat minibuses were to be legalised in congested Hong Kong. It cost him a good deal of money, since he was not dealing with junior civil servants, to find out from the transport department the precise specifications of the vehicles and thus grab a piece of the market by ordering the minibuses from Japan.'

Dobson said 'It would appear that there was corruption in the Hong Kong transport department at the time when Mr Shephard was Commissioner. There is no suggestion that he recognised it or sorted it out.

'I have no wish to make unwarranted aspersions about Mr Shephard but I believe that the information I have put before the House obliges the Secretary of State to investigate the suitability of Mr Shephard to run a minibus service in London.'

The junior transport minister, Reg Eyre did not reply directly to Dobson's call for an investigation.

The AMOS minibus proposal was subject to a public inquiry in March. The inspector's report is still awaited.

Mick Hamer

Lords incline to charity

CHARITABLE housing associations fear that enforced sales resulting from a new extension to the government's 'Right to buy' policy will mean the death of many of the smaller associations and must do incalculable damage to the future of the voluntary housing movement.

Not only is the government's Housing and Building Control Bill, granted its second Reading in the Lords last Monday, directly opposed to the fundamental principles of charity law, but it is also retrospective. Under the legislation houses will have to be sold to tenants wanting to buy if they are in a scheme which has benefitted from a government grant since 1974, though there were no strings attached to the grants at the time. The government estimates that 80,000 tenants or around one quarter of all tenants of charitable associations will gain the right to buy at up to 50 per cent discount.

In the Lords on Monday, the Bill's clause 2, giving the right to buy, was criticised by peers from all parties. The National Federation of Housing Associations, which has been lobbying Conservative peers, hopes the Bill may be defeated when it is debated in the Lords in the next two weeks.

Charitable housing trust properties are often small islands of cheap and decent housing in areas where house prices and rents have soared out of reach of local people. While large organisations like Peabody Trust are opposed to the new measure, they will survive it. It is the smaller ones that could be wiped out overnight by home ownership, which is 'undoubtedly one of the most significant and beneficial social revolutions of this century' according to housing minister John Stanley.

Associations also work with other voluntary bodies, offering accommodation to people returning to the community – just as the government ordered – from psychiatric hospitals, hostels and prisons. Self-help and voluntary effort to rehabilitate them will founder on the lack of accommodation.

Charity law states that a charity's property can only be sold when 'the sale is expedient in the interests of the charity and at the best possible price.' As tenants of just three years' standing will be able to buy the charity's property at a 33 per cent discount (and more long-standing tenants at a higher discount), Stanley's clause clearly fails on both counts.

Neal Morris

The battlegrounds

The seats Labour must win

Conservative majority in 1979 less than 7,000

Constituency	Maj	Notes
B'ham Northfield	100	(1)
Bury South	400	Lab 79
Dulwich	500	Lab 79
Aberdeen South	500	
L'pool Broadgreen	600	
Nottingham South	600	Lab 79
Stirling	700	
Hornchurch	769	UB
Glanford & Scunthorpe	800	
Luton South	900	
Stockton South	900	Lab 79; SDP
Calder Valley	1300	
Bolton NE	1400	Lab 79
Croydon NW	1400	(2)
B'ham Erdington	1400	Lab 79
Fulham	1499	UB
Crawley	1500	
Cambridge	1700	
Great Yarmouth	1700	
Glasgow Cathcart	1700	Lab 79
Pendle	2000	
Edinburgh Central	2000	Lab 79
Dudley West	2100	
Welwyn & Hatfield	2300	
Keighley	2400	Lab 79
Westminster North	2400	
Ilford South	2400	
Southampton Test	2600	
Erewash	2600	
Brecon & Radnor	2600	
Putney	2730	UB
Ynys Mon (Anglesey)	2817	UB
Peterborough	2900	
Eltham	2900	
Bury North	3000	Lab 79
Clwyd SW	3200	
Birmingham Yardley	3300	
Chorley	3300	
Norwich North	3500	Lab 79
Crewe & Nantwich	3600	Lab 79
Edinburgh South	3600	
Medway	3700	
Lincoln	3800	
Hampstead & Highgate	3800	
Bristol NW	4000	
Enfield North	4100	
Gloucestershire W	4174	UB
Hornsey & Wood Green	4300	
Rugby & Kenilworth	4300	
Ayr	4300	
Langbaurgh	4300	
Stockport	4400	
Dartford	4700	
Manchester Withington	4700	
Streatham	4800	
Staffs SE	4900	
Elmet	5000	
Cardiff Central	5000	
West Lancashire	5000	
Brentford & Isleworth	5039	UB
Northampton North	5100	
Newark	5100	
Dover	5200	
Wallasey	5400	
Coventry SW	5400	
Bolton West	5600	Lab 79
Littleborough & Saddleworth	5600	
Rossendale & Darwin	5700	
Newcastle Central	5800	
Norfolk NW	6100	SDP
Wansdyke	6400	
High Peak	6400	
Edinburgh Pentlands	6400	
Edinburgh West	6400	
Ilford North	6500	
Gravesham	6600	
Milton Keynes	6700	
Watford	6800	
B'ham Selly Oak	6800	
Portsmouth North	6900	

Con seats most at risk to the Liberals

Montgomery	1593	UB
Richmond & Barnes	2500	
Chelmsford	3500	
Wiltshire North	4700	
Hereford	5000	
Gordon	5200	
North Cornwall	5300	
Southport	6527	UB
North Devon	6900	
Salisbury	7100	
Gainsborough & Horncastle	7400	
Brigg & Cleethorpes	7700	
L'pool Mossley Hill	9100	Lib 79

Con seats most at risk to the SNP

Banff & Buchan	1300
Tayside North	2000
Argyll & Bute	4100
Perth & Kinross	5200
Galloway	5200
Angus East	6500

Labour's marginals

Oxford East	200	Con 79
Cunninghame North	300	Con 79
Corby	400	
Nottingham East	400	
Slough	500	
Mitcham & Morden	602	UB SDP (3)
Hertfordshire West	700	Con 79
Southampton Itchen	800	SDP
NW Leicestershire	800	
South Derbyshire	900	Con 79
Halifax	900	
Edmonton	900	
Lewisham West	900	
Stevenage	1000	Con 79
Bridgend	1000	
Darlington	1052	UB (4)
Carmarthen	1200	(5)
York	1250	UB
The Wrekin	1400	Con 79
Harlow	1400	
Ealing North	1400	Con 79
Nuneaton	1400	
Ellesmere Port & Neston	1500	Con 79
Derby North	1500	
Batley & Spen	1700	Con 79
Renfrew West & Inverclyde	1800	
Glasgow Hillhead	2000	Con 79 (6)
Lewisham East	2100	
Colne Valley	2200	Lib 79

UB: Unchanged boundaries
Lab 79: 'Core' of new seat won by Labour in 1979 on old boundaries
Con 79: 'Core' of new seat won by Conservatives in 1979
Lib 79: 'Core' of new seat won by Liberals in 1979
SDP: MP elected in 1979 defected to SDP
1: Labour won by-election in October 1982
2: Liberals won by-election in October 1981
3: Conservatives won by-election, June 1982
4; Labour held seat in by-election, March 1983
5: Plaid Cymru second
6: SDP won by-election, March 1982

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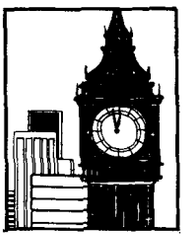

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Everything you ever wanted to know about marginals

THE MOMENT that you all – well, some of you – have been waiting for has arrived. On the facing page appears the first detailed guide to the battlegrounds where the next general election will be decided.

For the past three years squads of broadcasters, academics and computer boffins have been picking over the new political map of Britain as it has unfurled from the hands of the Boundary Commission. Their main purpose has been to prepare for the orgasm of results on election night. In order to predict the national outcome from the first five, or ten, or 50 returns, it will be necessary to calculate political change in each seat from 1979. In order to do that, it will be necessary to know what the political complexion of each seat *was* in 1979.

That is what the serried ranks of number-crunchers have been doing. Only 59 seats in the next House of Commons will have unaltered boundaries. The remaining 591 seats will, to a lesser or greater extent, be new ones. By looking, ward by ward, at the political characteristics of each seat, the 1979 general election has been 'rerun' by computer to find out what would have happened had electors been voting in the new seats rather than the old ones.

It has been apparent for some time that the new boundaries will make life harder for Labour. Inner city areas, whose declining populations support safe Labour majorities, have lost seats; while outer suburban areas, with expanding populations and generally safe Tory majorities, have gained seats.

But until now no information has been made public on what matters most to politicians, party organisers, activists and some voters: the new marginals. As ever, it is in the marginals that the next election will be won and lost – the mould broken or the mould renewed. It is now possible to identify where they are. Next week *The Almanac of British Politics*,* by Robert Waller, will be published. Loosely based on a similar guide to American politics, Waller's book provides a thumbnail sketch, together with demographic as well as political details, of each of the 650 seats that will comprise the new House of Commons.

Waller's 1979 'results' – from which my tables of the new marginals are derived – have been largely drawn from the work done by ITN and the BBC. (But not completely: the broadcasters reckon that Stockton South was 'won' in 1979 by Labour; Waller believes it would have been a Tory seat. Either way, it is a seat Labour must win next time: the heart of Stockton South is the old seat of Thornaby – in fact won last time by Ian Wrigglesworth, who is now in the SDP.)

The other information in the book is Waller's own work. He provides important social information about each seat in standard form, detailing housing tenure, the proportion of black and Asian voters, and how middle-class each constituency is. As Waller says, a seat-by-seat portrait of Britain is relevant to far more than electoral calculation. It tells the reader

> where the leafy residential areas of a town are to be found, where the council estates are, where one can discern that divide between the 'right and wrong side of the tracks,' the 'east and west ends of town.' All kinds of political cleavage are illustrated: between North and South, England and Scotland, urban and rural areas.

ELECTORAL CALCULATION, however, is perhaps the most urgent use to which the book will be put. In particular, Labour can now measure with painful precision the size of its task. According to Waller, this is how the 1979 election would have turned out if it had been fought on the new boundaries instead of the old:

	Actual result	'New boundaries' result
CON	339	360
LAB	268	257
LIB	11	10
Welsh/Scots Nats	4	5
Ulster	12	17
Speaker	1	1
TOTAL	635	650

In order to win the next election outright, Labour needs to win 325 seats. That means winning back all the seats now in the hands of SDP defectors, and then gaining 68 seats now held by the Conservatives.

In practice, the task will be even greater than that. Suppose, modestly, three SDP defectors retain their seats. Suppose Richard Wainwright 'gains' Colne Valley for the Liberals (Labour would have narrowly taken the new seat in 1979). Suppose Labour fail to recapture Bermondsey and Mitcham & Morden (both by-election losses). Suppose Labour fail in the new Glasgow Hillhead seat (on the new boundaries that, like Colne Valley, would count as a Labour 'loss'). Then Labour needs to gain no fewer than 75 seats from the Tories.

My list of marginals contains the 79 seats where the Tory majority in 1979 has been calculated to have been less than 7,000. To win the next general election outright Labour must win nearly all of these. That would require a swing to Labour in the marginals of nearly seven per cent – the largest of any election since 1945.

Even to overhaul the Conservatives as the largest party would probably require Labour gains of 50 to 60 seats (the precise number depends of how many, if any, seats the Conservatives lose to the Liberals and/or Scottish Nationalists). That would require a four to five per cent swing. As the table shows, this would mean winning back a number of seats which presently have a Labour MP occupying the 'core' seat under the old boundaries. For example, Sam Silkin held Dulwich for Labour in 1979. The boundary changes make it now a Tory marginal; so if Labour's new candidate, Kate Hoey, wins the seat, it will be a Labour 'gain'. Equally, a number of 'Labour' seats currently have Tory MPs under the old boundaries. So if Paul Boateng wins West Hertfordshire, it will count as a Labour 'hold', even though the core seat, Hemel Hempstead, was won by the Conservatives in 1979 on the old boundaries. (Equally, if Boateng fails, it will be a Labour 'loss'.)

The Liberals will enter the next election defending ten seats nominally won in 1979, rather than the 11 they actually won. Two of their MPs would have to make 'gains' to keep their jobs: Richard Wainwright in Colne Valley and David Alton in Liverpool Mossley Hill (which incorporates much of Alton's present Edge Hill seat). On the other hand, David Steel's present seat divides into two, both designated as Liberal. Steel will fight the safer Tweeddale, Ettrick & Lauderdale (estimated Liberal 1979 majority 4,500), while another Liberal will 'defend' neighbouring Roxburgh & Berwickshire. There the nominal majority is just 300. As Waller points out, if much of the local Liberal vote is personally tied to Steel, Roxburgh could turn out on election night to be a Liberal 'loss'.

One large caveat must be entered about this exercise. Should the Liberal/SDP Alliance make the kind of breakthrough it constantly claims it will achieve, conventional notions about what is a marginal may disappear in a puff of electoral smoke. My guess, however, is that these notions will turn out to be more durable than the SDP, in particular, would like. If, after the next election, the roll-call of marginal seats contains some unfamiliar names, it is likely to be the Boundary Commissioners who have caused the change, not the Alliance mould-breakers. □

* Published by Croom Helm, £12.95

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Equality in a cold climate

A. B. Atkinson* argues for a clear statement of the case for 'equality' as the basis for future Labour policy

THE COMMITMENT OF the Labour Party to equality is rather like the singing of the 'Red Flag' at its gatherings. All regard it as part of a cherished heritage, but those on the platform often seem to have forgotten the words. It serves to rally Party conferences but would not be regarded as appropriate for meetings with the EEC Council of Ministers or the International Monetary Fund. As Tawney once remarked, 'the degeneration of Socialist parties on assuming office is now an old story'.

Why has the story always turned out this way? Why has the principle of equality retained merely ritual significance? Why do commitments to 'bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth' (Labour's 1974 Manifesto) turn out to be empty? One answer that is frequently given points to the lack of accountability of Labour Cabinets and the subordination by Ministers of long-term objectives to short-run events. The leaders of Labour governments have seen their job as that of governing, an activity in which manifesto commitments are a handicap and socialist principles of academic significance. Crossman described the Labour Party as having lost its way 'not only because it lacks a map of the new country it is crossing, but because it thinks maps unnecessary for experienced travellers'.

But there may be another explanation, and the responsibility may not be that of the 'experienced travellers' alone. There may have been a lack not only of political will but also of intellectual momentum behind principles such as equality. The case for a commitment may not have been made sufficiently forcefully. We may have neglected the egalitarian theory which is the foundation for political practice. If Labour Ministers had looked for a map, they might have found it to be missing or at best faded.

Where does one turn to find a clear statement of the case for equality? Almost invariably, the answer is Tawney's classic essay *Equality*, first published in 1931. For its powerful prose and telling argument this essay can scarcely be bettered. But Tawney himself would surely have been the first to recognise that his conception and statement of the problem were very much products of his times. The case for equality has to be made in terms of current concerns and circumstances. There is therefore a need to restate the case for the commitment to equality so that it occupies a central position in Labour Party policy. Those concerned that a future Labour government should pursue this objective with greater resolution than in the Wilson-Callaghan years must rehearse the intellectual arguments for equality and their relevance to modern times. The ways in which the commitment to equality could and should influence the whole range of policy issues which will confront a future Cabinet must be demonstrated.

Clarity about the nature of the objective is the first essential. Sweeping references to the 'reduction of inequality' or to a 'shift in the distribution of wealth and power' are not sufficient. Their generality renders such goals largely vacuous and means that they are too easily ignored when it comes to the reality of government. Moreover, it is only by making the objectives more precise that we can distinguish a socialist vision of fair and equitable distribution from that of other political parties.

The objective of economic justice can be pursued at different levels, and we may consider increasing degrees of commitment, with the stakes rising at each stage. The Conservatives tend to opt out when the stakes are low, the Liberals to hang on to the next stage; as far as can be discerned, the Social Democrats intend to quit well short of egalitarianism.

Most people are in favour of abolishing poverty. But poverty means different things to different people. Freedom from want, in terms of food, housing, medical attention, etc., is evidently an important goal, but it represents a very limited conception of the problem of poverty. It means, for instance, that social security benefits have only to be maintained in real terms and not increased in line with rising prosperity elsewhere. According to this view, poverty will disappear with economic growth. This restricted perception of the problem is unlikely to be acceptable to the Labour Party.

The case for a more radical approach to poverty in Britain, concerned not only with an absolute subsistence level but also with contemporary living standards, has been well put by a succession of Labour writers. In the *Future of Socialism* Crosland argued:

> we should not behave like medical officers of health, concerned only to provide sufficient food and clothing to ward off starvation and ill-health. We are surely concerned with happiness and social justice also. This demands a relative, subjective view of poverty [taking account of] the enforced deprivation not of luxuries indeed, but of the small comforts which are really 'conventional necessities'.

More recently, the authors of *Manifesto* wrote:

> The minimum we seek might be called a 'participation' standard to distinguish it from the subsistence standard adopted after the war [which] fails to recognise that needs are social, and not merely physical. We want a new right for all to share fully in the life of the community. (Cripps *et al.*, 1981).

The adoption of such a relative standard has several implications. It means that social security benefits have to be linked to the general level of incomes, that unemployment benefit (for example) should be maintained in relation to incomes at work; that the low-pay target should be set in relation to average earnings and not kept at the levels set by the Trade Boards of 1909; that participation should be open to all groups, regardless of sex or race.

Of particular importance is the fact that the 'participation' standard has to be viewed not just in terms of cash incomes. Income and wealth have been the variables of primary concern in economic theories of inequality, and it is their – still more narrow – counterparts which are reflected in official statistics. But they capture only part of the problem. The objective is also to secure a minimum standard for the quality of housing, of medical facilities, of education, of safety at work, of the environment and so on.

The need for this wider view of minimum standards was recognised in the concept of the 'social wage' which made a brief appearance under the Labour government of 1974-9. This was a welcome advance, emphasising that improvements in public provision could be set against higher taxes, but it is wrong to seek to combine everything in a single number. £1,000 of earnings cannot necessarily be added to £500 of housing benefits. It may be that the lack of adequate medical facilities cannot be compensated by wage increases or, conversely, that a family short of cash cannot be compensated by increased spending on schools.

The 'participatory' minimum should therefore be interpreted in terms of specific targets for each of the different dimensions of need with which we are concerned. These targets should be *relative* and should be defined in terms of *outcomes*. (For example, in the field of medical care we are aiming not to provide a minimum allocation of resources but to ensure a standard of health, where this is determined by the current conditions and expectations of society.)

Crosland's case for a relative poverty standard was based on an appeal to social

**The article is taken from Professor Atkinson's contribution to* Socialism in a Cold Climate, *to be published by Unwin Paperbacks on 18 April, £2.95.*

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justice. Recent writing on the theory of justice seems to have had relatively little to say explicitly on the definition of poverty, but we can draw on their wider discussion of the distributional problem. It would, for example, be possible to see concern with poverty as a minimal function of Nozick's 'night-watchman' state[1], although this is most obviously applicable as a justification for the absolute approach. The case for a relative standard can be based more directly on the social contract theory of Rawls[2], in which the 'difference principle' leads to concern with the position of the least advantaged, a concern which – given a crude interpretation of his ideas – may be seen as 'insurance' against an income which is low in relation to that of others in the society.

The Rawlsian approach brings us to the question of inequality. What is the relation between the twin goals of abolishing poverty and reducing inequality? In much discussion of Labour policy these are spoken of in the same breath, as if they were complementary. But that need not be the case. The argument by the Right that reducing inequality may mean lower living standards for all is not an empty one. A choice may have to be made. For Rawls the answer is straightforward. It is the maximisation of the benefit to the least advantaged that has priority, according to his 'difference principle'.

The espousal of an egalitarian position means that we regard as relevant the question of how incomes are distributed above the poverty line. It may be necessary to accept that incomes are lower for everyone as the price for narrowing differences. This would not apply where it is a matter of starvation – meeting such urgent needs evidently comes first. But the concept of relative poverty, explicitly directed at the relation between incomes, would have no such claim for priority. The emergence of large disparities may be seen as too high a price to pay for a modest improvement in the living standards of the low-paid.

Egalitarianism – or the concern with the extent of economic distance – should be a major element in Labour's approach to distributional policy. It is, indeed, the principal feature which marks it out from its rivals. But it will not be easy to convince the electorate. On what arguments should its case be made? What it is *not* based on, as frequently alleged by the Right, is envy. Such negative considerations have no role to play. Quite the reverse: the case should be founded on the vision of the kind of society which should inspire people, calling not on feelings of dissatisfaction but on an identification with the lot of others.

The most straightforward argument for reducing economic and social distance is that these are, on their present scale, incompatible with a full sense of participation. The point was made by Tawney in a frequently quoted passage:

> What a community requires . . . is a common culture, because, without it, it is not a community at all . . . But a common culture cannot be created merely by desiring it. It must rest upon practical foundations of social organisation. It is incompatible with sharp contrasts between the economic standards and educational opportunities of different classes. . . . It involves, in short, a large measure of economic equality – not necessarily in the sense of an identical level of pecuniary incomes, but of equality of environment, of access to education and the means of civilisation, of security and independence, and of the social consideration which equality in these matters usually carries with it.

Should we not, like Plato's legislator, 'announce the acceptable limits of wealth and poverty', allowing a person to have up to four times the lowest level of income? Such a limit would help to prevent the divisions in the style of living which destroy the sense of community. Just as we are not willing to tolerate a situation in which people lack the resources to participate, so too we want to avoid the emergence of a privileged group able to opt out of common problems through the private provision of facilities such as medicine and schools and through the corporate welfare system.

The distinctive nature of the egalitarian approach may be seen from a consideration of the plans for economic recovery that have been advanced. It appears that the Conservative programme for expansion is based, on the one hand, on the creation of low-paying jobs and, on the other, on the hope that large financial gains for businesses will generate new employment. The Labour Party, by contrast, should surely be opposed to such a widening of economic disparity – to both the worsening of the position of the low-paid and the gains to the highly privileged.

John Sturrock/Network

THE CONVERSION of the commitment to equality into a concrete programme for policy is a major task requiring a great deal of preparation, as was illustrated by the 1974-9 Labour government's 'success' story of the new pension scheme and its 'failure' to implement the proposed wealth tax. It is not the aim here to discuss policy in detail, however, for such a discussion would have to take account of the circumstances in which a future Labour government is likely to take office and of the constraints that it will face. The aim is instead to describe *guidelines* which can be used to judge policy questions which are likely to arise, criteria which are mid-way between general principles of justice and specific policy proposals.

The first suggested guideline is that it is crucial to understand the nature and extent of inequality. We need both quantitative measures of the distribution of income and wealth and theoretical analyses of the forces

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that tend to intensify or moderate inequality.

This may sound like a job-creation scheme for academics, but the contribution of knowledge should not be undervalued, as has been recognised by the Social Democrats: 'The only way of achieving a more equitable distribution in a democracy is to secure a greater awareness by the mass of the population of the facts about poverty' (Owen, *Face the Future*). The Conservatives, to their shame, have set about systematically dismantling the apparatus to collect key distributional information. The Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth was abolished on the grounds that the statistical information had been improved, but within two years the Rayner Review of the Government Statistical Service announced that work on estimates of the distribution of wealth was being stopped and recommended that estimates of the distribution of income be prepared only every three years.

As has long been recognised by reformers, statistics are a powerful weapon. The Labour Party should give priority to the establishment of an independent body – not subject to temporary political whims – which would have the resources to collect and to analyse distributional information.

If Labour and the Social Democrats are likely to agree on the need for information, they are bound to part company on the question of the measures that should be adopted to achieve lesser inequality. Most fundamentally, whereas the Liberal approach sees the market as having primacy in the determination of gross incomes (wages and profits), the Socialist approach sees the distribution of economic rewards as a proper subject for intervention. The Alliance seems likely to confine its activities to redistribution through taxation and public spending. By contrast, a Labour government should act to secure a distribution of wages and profits which, taken together with the tax and benefit system, will ensure its distributional objectives.

The first (and most obvious) application of this guideline is to Labour's policy for economic recovery. The successful pursuit of higher employment will in itself contribute to the reduction of inequality, but the design of this policy should be set in a specifically distributional context. The choice of measures should be based on their implications for equity objectives – aspects which cannot be read from the computer printouts of the Treasury forecasting model.

The return to full employment has typically been discussed in terms of conventional Keynesian measures, but there are strong grounds for believing that a major change in economic strategy is required if unemployment is to be tackled in a serious way. In this context a revitalised distributional policy may have a significant role to play. Tawney, writing in the 1930s, referred to the fact that Britain needed a common culture

> in a special degree at a moment like the present, when circumstances confront it with the necessity of giving a new orientation to its economic life, because it is in such circumstances that the need for co-operation, and for the mutual confidence and tolerance upon which co-operation depends, is particularly pressing.

The Labour government would, for instance, be ill-advised to attempt to conceal from the electorate that real wages for those in work are unlikely to rise in the foreseeable future. Would it not be better to make a virtue of this necessity? After all, equality conveys obligations as well as benefits.

The policy emerging in these new circumstances is bound to involve some form of collective agreement on incomes, both wages and profits. This means that the Labour Party will have to seize the nettle of incomes policy. It need not be of the past type, nor need it bear that name, but some kind of consensus will be necessary. There is no reason why the market economy should lead to an equitable distribution between labour and capital; nor is there any reason to suppose that free collective bargaining will ensure an equitable distribution of earnings. What would distinguish Labour's policy on incomes is an explicitly redistributive bias.

In the design of the policy towards gross incomes, two aspects warrant close attention. The first is the role of private capital. This applies both to individual claims to assets, and their transmission through inheritance, and to the function and reward of capital in the process of production. The ineffectiveness of, for example, the Capital Transfer Tax in limiting the conveyance of inherited wealth would be staggering to those such as Josiah Wedgwood, who concluded many years ago that 'the ethical arguments in favour of claims to inherit . . . are extraordinarily weak'. Second, the structure and organisation of industry is usually discussed, as part of the alternative economic strategy, in terms of its contribution to the development and employment of output. But this structure may have profound implications for the distribution of resources. The scale of enterprises and the associated managerial hierarchies affect the pattern of earnings, as do their links through the international economy.

THE WEIGHT ATTACHED to the distribution of gross incomes does not mean that redistribution via progressive taxation is redundant. On the contrary, an essential element in Labour's strategy must be the reform of the tax structure. The fiscal history of the postwar period is a sorry one as far as socialists are concerned. The tax threshold has fallen markedly, and the tax base has been eroded by the extension of tax allowances and reliefs. These developments have combined to shift the burden of income taxation towards lower- and lower-middle income groups.

In any attempt to redress this situation, two factors will be important. The first is that the tax structure must be sufficiently flexible to allow the burden to be shared more equitably. In the case of the income tax there is in effect a choice between a 'simple' system with a single basic rate, progression being ensured by the allowances (and higher rates for a few taxpayers), and a 'complex' system with rates of tax that start low and build up gradually. The former has administrative advantages but implies a loss of flexibility. For those whose distributional concern is limited to the position of the people at the bottom, the simple structure may suffice; but if one is concerned with the question of how the burden is shared between those just above the poverty line and those higher up, then greater flexibility may be needed.

The second ingredient is an analysis of the reasons why the fiscal system has changed in the way it has and why it has been impervious to reform. Economists have rightly been criticised for ignoring the functioning of the state. It is clearly foolhardy to embark on further tax changes without an understanding of the causes of previous failures.

Social insurance will be an essential element in realising Labour's commitment to equality. It will be necessary to ensure a guaranteed minimum, defined in relation to the level of incomes elsewhere. At the same time, it is part of the wider vision that Labour brings to bear that social insurance will not be only a transfer of income.

First, it is crucial that the guaranteed income should be provided as of right and not subject to a means test. The evidence of means tests, over many years, is that this approach – central to Conservative welfare policy – is incompatible with dignity and self-respect. People should see themselves as entitled to social insurance and treated as such; it is the great achievement of the National Insurance system that this is felt to be the case with the universal benefits. What is required is a strengthening of the insurance scheme, not the retreat we have witnessed in the past few years.

Second, the receipt of benefit should be linked with clearly identified contingencies. The uncertainty which is otherwise generated in the minds of recipients reduces the sense of security provided; the uncertainty in the minds of the public engenders hostility towards claimants. □

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INDUSTRY

Free for some

John McIlroy explains the dangers of Free Ports

WHEN SIR GEOFFREY HOWE announced, at the tail end of his Budget speech, that legislation would be introduced to enable the establishment of Free Ports, it represented yet another success for those right-wing economists and urban planners who see the liberation of capital, and the deregulation of industry, as the pathway to regenerating Britain's inner cities and revitalising its economy.

In essence, a Free Port or Free Zone – some 350 exist worldwide, largely in third-world countries – is an isolated, enclosed, policed area, in which the tariffs which control the country's trade do not apply. Goods imported from abroad and then re-exported are no longer the subject of domestic duties. Within the zone, national taxes, industrial regulations and social services have no effect.

Surprisingly, the saga behind Sir Geoffrey's announcement begins with the prestigious urban planner, then a Labour Party member, Sir Peter Hall. In a 1977 address to the Royal Town Planning Institute, Sir Peter suggested Freeports as a solution to the denuding of the inner cities and the flight of manufacturing industry to the developing countries. If third-world countries could produce cheaper than the UK then one answer, he argued, was to 'recreate the Hong Kong of the 1950s and 1960s inside inner London or inner Glasgow'.

In the Spring of 1980, Sir Geoffrey Howe was not prepared to go quite this far. The experimental Enterprise Zones that he *was* prepared to initiate were far more limited than Sir Peter's proposals. A company siting its activities in one of the designated areas – there are today more than 20 – received a ten-year holiday from rates and development land tax, 100 per cent capital allowance for industrial and commercial buildings and exemption from many planning controls.

The problem with this more limited conception is that Enterprise Zones simply relocate economic activity. The Enterprise Zone Action Group (a business organisation) claims that in the Trafford Salford zone, for example, more than 80 per cent of the companies have come from less than five miles away. A major impact of the inducements on offer, rather than providing jobs, is to allow landowners and property developers within the zones to make a killing. And if jobs are created inside the zones, there may be redundancies outside, in companies competing with the newly subsidised.

The fact that these zones were enfeebled editions of the Free Port led to the reassertion of more full-blooded versions. The Adam Smith Institute, based in Washington and London, is a ginger group for right-wing policies in both the USA and Britain. Its figurehead is the arch apostle of laissez faire, Friedrich von Hayek. Such familiar right-wing figures as the *Daily Telegraph* columnist T. E. Utley, industrial relations consultant Sir Leonard Neal and former Tory MP Esmond Wright decorate its gatherings.

Last year, the Institute produced a brief report, *Establishment of Freeports in the United Kingdom*. It urged the necessity to go beyond Enterprise Zones by creating Free Ports which, on the third-world model, would involve a bonfire of all existing controls over industry. As the report states, '. . . the trade minister would be empowered to suspend for fixed periods the operation in the freeports of most of the Acts which regulate manufacturing in Britain . . .'

The progress of the Adam Smith document provides confirmation of the extent to which, under Reagan and Thatcher, the economic fringe has come in from the cold. It was quickly examined by the Department of Trade and Mr Bruce-Gardyne soon found himself chairing an inter-departmental committee, established by Sir Geoffrey Howe, on the issue. The committee reported with remarkable alacrity. By 3 March, Sir Geoffrey was informing the House that his working party had recommended the go-ahead for Freeports. Its findings (*Freeports in the United Kingdom*) were, to a degree, cautious. While legislation should be quickly introduced to enable action, this should depend on demand. 'In view of the inevitable uncertainties about the real scale of user demand we recommend that authorisation should be initially limited to two or three experimental sites.'

Freeports had, however, reached take off – with slightly surprising speed and a minimum of public analysis or debate. The extent to which their proponents have made out their case, in terms of their explicit goals, is highly questionable. The Free Zones for which success is claimed cannot be separated from the context in which they operate. The case of Puerto Rico is particularly instructive. Its 20-year post war boom disintegrated when the multinationals discovered that they could locate more profitably in countries with still more disciplined labour.

And this is the real point. Whatever success can be attributed to Free Zones has depended on the ability of quasi-totalitarian regimes to reproduce cheap docile labour operating under barbaric conditions. In South Korea, 12-year-old girls work 18 hours a day, seven days a week, for under £1,000 a year. In Singapore, guest workers need government permission to marry, permission dependent on agreement by both parties to accept sterilisation after a second child is born. The extent to which metropolitan deregulation can compete with these kinds of condition, for the favours of internationally mobile capital, is, it is to be hoped, limited. □

The Mobil Design Award for Small Firms is now in the final stages of judging.

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The grand winner will be announced on May 17.

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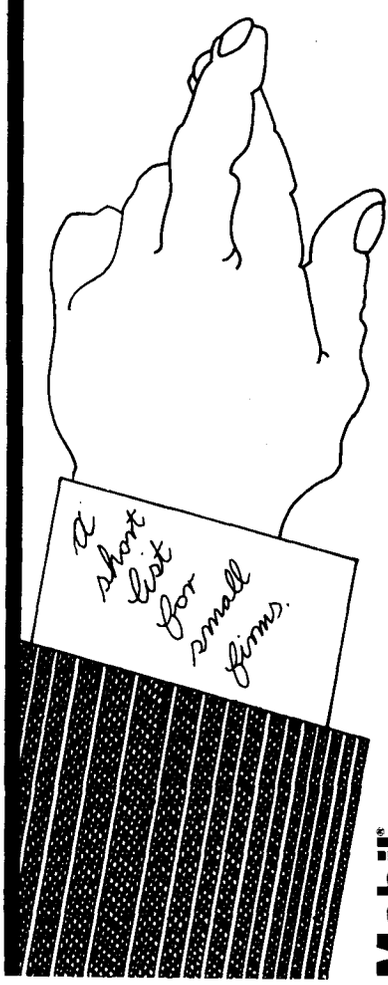

Mobil

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STOCK EXCHANGE

Unlisted casino

David Philip explains how speculative share bubbles on the new small companies market rise – and burst

SINCE THE BEGINNING of the year shareholders in many small companies whose investments are quoted on the London stock markets have been riding a switchback of boom and slump. First prices rocketed, with the share prices of companies such as Arlen Electrical doubling within a week. Then, the bubble burst and prices tumbled even more rapidly. The single most dramatic example of the scale of this cycle of speculation was Polly Peck, a dressmaking and fruit importing company whose shares, having risen steadily from 7p each in 1980 to £19 by November last year, doubled over the next ten weeks on a wave of speculative euphoria, crashed back to £10 and now convalesce at £16 apiece.

The stock markets are supposed to provide a mechanism for companies to raise money from the investing public. The company can issue shares, or its owners can sell off shares which they already hold. The markets then provide a forum in which investors can buy and sell the shares. Share prices are determined purely by supply and demand and may only obscurely reflect the underlying value of the company involved. During the 1970s, the flow of new businesses seeking to issue shares to the public dried up. Instead, industry preferred to raise its cash on bank overdrafts and short-term borrowings. It became increasingly difficult for the Stock Exchange to rebut the argument that it was simply irrelevant to the needs of new businesses.

The recession following the 1973 energy crisis meant that few companies could justify the costs, or risks, of 'going to the market'. The costs are the result of the Stock Exchange's requirement that all new entrants to the market sign a 'Listing Agreement', making detailed disclosures of the company's finances and giving a profit record for five consecutive years.

The risk to a company in 'going public' stems from the fact that *at least* 25 per cent of its shares (and usually more) must be offered to the public. Once shares are launched, however, their stock-market price is highly sensitive to the level of dividends paid out. If profits (and therefore dividends) cannot be maintained, the share price falls. A rapacious investor can then purchase a substantial stake in the business for less than the real value of the company's assets.

The Stock Exchange announced a solution to this problem in 1980 – a new market for small companies which could not afford, or did not yet want, full listings on the Stock Exchange. It was to be called the Unlisted Securities Market (USM). While financial disclosures would still be required, the formalities of entry were reduced and only a three-year past profit record was to be required. Most important, only 10 per cent of the shares had to be offered to investors.

THE USM HAS BEEN quite successful in attracting new companies. Over 140 have joined since it was first established (four are presently suspended, seven have since taken out full listings and two have been taken over by others). Investors' interest in small company shares, on both the USM and the full market, has been re-awakened. However, the Stock Exchange's declared hope that it would open new channels of investment for cash-starved growing enterprises was wildly optimistic.

When a company issues shares on the stock market, its existing proprietor or proprietors suddenly find that the often virtually unsaleable shares which they held in the company before the flotation have been transformed into readily marketable assets, either to sell for cash or as security for personal borrowings. The 1978 Finance Act made this situation even more attractive. Tax reliefs were introduced for proprietors or executives who borrow money to buy shares in their company. There are also reliefs against Income Tax for capital losses on USM investments and against Capital Transfer Tax for the owners of businesses who hand over such shares to their children.

There are no reliable overall statistics in this field. But knowledgable observers agree that at least as many companies have made use of the USM for the primary benefit of the owners of the businesses as have done so for any positive development of new British industry. The volatility of the small-company share market means that the value of these private holdings can often be multiplied many times over.

This volatility is largely the result of the small numbers of shares which are issued. Normally, when a company is 'floated', three-quarters of the shares being issued will immediately be swallowed up by the pension funds and other institutions – leaving a small rump to be spread thinly around the market. When Microgen issued its shares in January, stockbrokers were allotted a meagre 200 shares each. Even a small order to buy would send brokers scurrying off desperate to find enough of the elusive shares. Inevitably, prices reacted dramatically. The shares were issued at 190p and rose on their first day to 370p. Rises of that scale have become commonplace for small company new issues.

Many of the companies listed on the USM are themselves engaged in speculative businesses, with over 45 per cent of the market being in electronic, energy or mineral related activities – all of which are traditionally high-risk fields. Some, like Bio-Isolates, claim to have developed new and valuable bacteriological processes which, if successful, offer the investor potentially unlimited reward – but are as yet untried and, in some cases, undeveloped.

Each new issue is heralded by a wave of publicity and is promptly stampeded by hungry subscribers. When Superdrug issued 25 per cent of its shares on the USM (hoping to raise £15 million) the issue was oversubscribed 95 times, a total offer of £1.6 billion. Many of the applicants were not looking for a long-term investment in the

London's Stock Exchange: less and less relevant to the requirements of industry

Hunter Davies

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new business, but were looking for the share price to rise in their first week. It did, from 93p to 268p. This merry-go-round of ever rising prices is as substantial as a chain letter. As *Financial Weekly* pointed out: 'The last man out when this market collapses is going to lose a lot of money.'

THE CHAIRMAN OF the Stock Exchange, Sir Nicholas Goodison, has publicly stated his concern that speculative trading fuelled by tipping sheets was driving the small-company share market, both on the USM and the full market, into dangerous waters. If the bubble bursts, then all the Stock Exchange's fine sounding words about creating new investment in small industry will be swept away in a general collapse of confidence in small company shares. The market is particularly vulnerable because so many of its early high-fliers were themselves shaky. The first year of the USM, before the current boom had even begun, was nearly its last, when Hesketh motorcycles and Euroflame wood stoves collapsed in rapid succession.

Polly Peck is a fully listed stock which, like many other small companies, has been caught up in the recent boom. On 9 February, at Polly Peck's AGM in its headquarters in the Commercial Road in the heart of the East End garment district, chairman Mr Asil Nadir announced, to delighted shareholders, that the company was 'on the verge of becoming a very large international concern' with 'unlimited trading potential'.

Behind the clothes and Cypriot citrus importing business lay a tangled and as yet not fully worked out web of political intrigue. The Cypriot government, which now only administers the Green Cypriot majority area of the island, was sure that Nadir was involved in dubious activities in the north of the island, with the blessing of the area's Turkish administration. On 23 February, at the peak of the Polly Peck boom, when every tipster worth his salt was extolling the virtues of Nadir as a near-eastern financial mastermind, the Cypriot government publicly accused Nadir and Polly Peck of trading in citrus grown on the 15,000 acres of groves sequestered by the Turkish administration after the 1974 invasion, illegally using a warehouse in the free port of Famagusta which the Cypriot government had been forced to abandon and relying on an illegal monopoly granted by the Turkish administration of Rauf Denktash (a close associate of Nadir's father) to dispose of the siezed citrus.

When the fragility of Polly Peck's position was suddenly revealed to the market, the share price dropped like a stone – falling to £17 in three days. Then the Stock Exchange finally suspended trading. When dealing reopened, it fell again, to £10 in two hours. The shares only recovered somewhat after Dr Gerard Vaughan, the Trade Minister, announced that he could see absolutely no reason why a Department of Trade investigation should be set up. The market has already recovered from the Polly Peck crash and is once again oblivious of the true weakness of the shares which it is pushing to even greater heights. □

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EQUAL PAY

Value added pay

The government is having to change the law on equal pay. Naomi Wayne looks at the new obstacles on the path to equality

IN A FAIRER world, how should the following jobs be rated? Typist, barrister, cleaner, teacher, refuse collector, train driver, cook, union official, light assembly worker, pilot? It's a question I used to put to shop stewards when I was working in the education department of a large Irish trade union in an attempt to get them to examine their own prejudices about how jobs are currently valued.

For reasons that were not always clear, they usually put the union official near the top, the cook at the bottom, and the typist low down. (Men tend to rate jobs they can't do as being without skill; women are the reverse.) Apart from that ranking, the stewards found it virtually impossible to decide who was worth more than whom. It's a salutary exercise for anyone wondering how to judge the proposed amendments to our equal pay law, for they are supposed to establish an entitlement to equal pay for work of equal value.

At the heart of the dilemma is the assumption, shared by many socialists, that pay differences between women and men can be left to lawyers alone because – unlike differences due to class – they do not stem from the basic organisation of society. In other words, discrimination against women is seen by many trade unions as a superficial irritant, not a fundamental social inequality. In consequence, they rely on the law to put it right, rather than seeing the issue of the sexual valuation of work as being one of their prime concerns.

While Britain's existing equal-pay legislation – which forbids discrimination against a woman doing the same job as a man – has probably remedied the grossest examples of blatant discrimination, it has not intervened in the market to prevent women from providing a mass of cheap labour. In July last year, the European Court of Justice told the UK government that, because its equal pay legislation did not give women doing different work from men the right to equal pay for work of equal value, it failed to intervene in the job market place to the extent that European law required.

For a government that has made the retrieval of market forces from the hands of interfering socialist do-gooders its mission in life, the ruling by the European court was an unpalatable charge. It is thus hardly surprising that it has concocted an equal value entitlement under law which leaves market forces untouched. Unfortunately, despite the stringent criticism both from the Equal Opportunities Commission in Britain and the EOC in Northern Ireland, very little public concern has been expressed about the changes.

THE EXISTING equal pay law provides that a woman who does the same, or similar work to a man, or whose job has been evaluated as equal in a job evaluation exercise, is entitled to equal pay, so long as her employer cannot establish that she is paid less because of a 'material difference other than sex'.

Under the amended act, a claimant must first try to establish her case under the old law. If she fails here, then the new equal value procedure comes into operation. An industrial tribunal will first decide whether to dismiss the claim as having no hope because 'there are no reasonable grounds for determining that the work is of equal value'. If some reasonable grounds are deemed to exist, a new 'material difference' clause comes into play. Under this, the claimant will have to prove that the difference between her wages and those of the man with whom she is comparing herself is not due to a 'material difference other than sex' (ie: is due to sex).

The tribunal may then try to persuade the parties to negotiate a voluntary settlement. Only after this will the tribunal refer the claim to a so-called 'independent expert'. If this expert finds the work to be of equal value, the employer can then come back again with an argument about 'material difference'. Only if the claimant parries *that* successfully will she qualify for a favourable award from the tribunal. The new possibilities (in an already daunting procedure) for endless stalling by employers, and the burden on the woman to persist with an equal value claim, mean that only the exceptionally determined and well represented woman is likely to get anywhere.

This, no doubt, is exactly as the government would wish it to be. The amendments are premised on the need to protect market forces, not on the use of law to protect the weak against exploitation or 'unconscious' discrimination. For instance, while the government has given the tribunals power to dismiss summarily 'no-hoper' claims, it has not suggested how these are to be identified. This power, if widely used, is likely to enshrine precisely those biased assumptions about 'women's work' which the concept of equal value is supposed to challenge. Unless a tribunal is briefed to question those market forces which lead skilled shorthand typists to work for less than many unskilled male labourers, then the tribunal is likely to reflect the assumption that such pay differentials are 'natural' and inevitable.

Then there is the sleight of hand which has shifted the burden of proof from employer to employee. Under the Equal Pay Act, employers have been able to use as their defence the argument that a pay differential was due to a material difference other than sex – and the employer had to prove it. Now it will be up to the claimant to prove that sexual discrimination is at work – or that her pay differential is *not* due to a 'material difference other than sex'. Thus it appears she will have to prove overt discrimination under a law introduced, in theory, to cover wage structures based on sexual inequality where discrimination is not overt.

The final problem is that where a job evaluation scheme exists, tribunals will not be allowed to examine whether it is fraudulent or embodies very explicit discriminatory principles – which it is unlikely to do. Tribunals will not be allowed to examine whether or not a job evaluation exercise is built on sexually exploitative principles – which they often are – only to consider a woman's claim that the exercise was fraudulent or overtly discriminatory – which they often are not.

If equality legislation is ever to be really effective, it must be built around the idea of the notional privileged person – that is, around the notion that a complainant is being treated worse than a man/Protestant/white person/able-bodied person *would* be in a similar position. This is the working principle of legislation on sexual discrimination(though not equal pay), race relations and, in Northern Ireland, 'fair employment'.

With equal value legislation, therefore, the fundamental question is 'if a man did this job, would he be paid more?' The answer, almost invariably, is 'yes'. He would be paid more than a woman whether or not the job is generally recognised as skilled. When I was working for a trade union I would ask the women shop stewards if men would work for their wages. They always said 'no'. And, without any agonising or computations about equal value, they always knew how much more a man would be paid – £20, £30, £40. The men beside them would always agree.

For equal pay legislation to have a real impact in undermining the use of women as cheap labour, it would need a mechanism for ensuring women could secure the male 'rate for the job'. It is impossible to imagine this government sanctioning such a fundamental upheaval in work and wage structures – not to mention the consequences it would have in family life. But how hard would trade unions fight for such a change, with all the implications for the differentials which so pre-occupy union life? Yet unions must make a choice: either they believe in the regulation of wages according to State sanctioned principles of fairness or 'value'; or they will use free collective bargaining to fight for the low paid. In Britain where the average hourly rate for women workers is £2.62 and for men £3.64, it is clear that neither State nor union has fought for the value of women's labour. □

Naomi Wayne works on equal pay and sex discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland.

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DIARY

Christopher Price

Unlike the Police Bill, the Data Protection Bill is at least better than nothing. So we decided not to vote against it on Second Reading. True, its safeguards are quite inadequate – no supervision of manual records, unregulated access by the police to any old data bank. But it could at least form a platform from which the Democratic State might one day control the Secret one. However, one difficulty of discussing it in Committee will be the micro-illiteracy of most MPs. I've just invested in a Shelton Z80 CP/M system, with an ICL terminal and a Triumph Adler daisywheel printer, in an attempt to put my chaotic files in some order and do a little preparation for what I suspect will be the first micro-general election. At the moment I'm a bewildered prisoner of my tiny workforce – eager young folk, half my age, who can understand it and make it do things. But even they are modest. 'You should see my eleven year old brother,' says my fabulous 17-year-old volunteer, Danny. And even I will learn.

○

I've just received a foretaste of the election in a pamphlet from my local Tory opponent, which was pushed through my letterbox last week. He tells me he's a lawyer and has just spent the afternoon with the local police in a patrol car when they actually caught a burglar. 'One down, too many to go,' he says. 'Only Conservatives really care about Law and Order.' Quite apart from the unpleasant undertones of his phraseology, I'm sure he meant 'an alleged burglar'. Or can he be one of those new Conservative lawyers who no longer believe that folk are innocent until proved guilty? I've no means of telling; but it's a bad sign since we now have to rely on lawyers in the Lords to put any worthwhile safeguards into the Police Bill. The Home Office is quietly buying off the doctors by limiting police access to their *evidence* rather than their records – bullets and blood-stained clothing, rather than personal files. But the gaping holes in the Bill remain, as Lord Salmon eloquently explained in the *Sunday Times* at the weekend. He will not be content until all interviews and statements are tape-recorded. At the Committee stage, we were told that the government had no objection in principle. ('I'm a passionate tape-recorder,' Mr Mayhew would tell us.) It was simply the cost. This was of course pure hypocrisy – we won't get tape recording because the Thatcher régime is now wholly at the beck and call of the less progressive elements in the police.

○

Our Sound Broadcasting Select Committee has suggested that the BBC install a 'panic button' for House of Commons broadcasting to cut out noises from the Gallery in case they're obscene or defamatory. I'm not against their doing so, but I do hope this isn't the thin end of the parliamentary censorship wedge. In a debate five years ago, when four of us were on trial for using our parliamentary privilege to blow the gaffe on Colonel 'ABC' Johnstone, Francis Pym suggested such a button to bleep us out next time we misbehaved. Happily he was taken to pieces by Enoch Powell who pointed out the unusual qualities which would be required in a parliamentary panic button man: 'He must be an individual who has even more profound knowledge of the rules of this House than yourself, Mr Speaker; who has an encyclopaedic knowledge of what is in agitation in the courts of the land from Land's End to John O'Groats . . .' It always surprises me how lightly some of my colleagues take our proper immunities, which were extracted with such effort and difficulty in the Bill of Rights of 1689. The only real power of MPs is to speak words without fear or favour, and the moment we are censored, the whole exercise becomes meaningless. The process has already begun. In a recent sex shop debate, Reg Race quoted the title of directories he found on sale inside his local establishment, *Phone 'em and Fuck 'em*, and our Methodist Speaker decided that four hyphens would be a more tasteful way of printing the latter verb. But, in doing so, he blunted Reg's point about the tastelessness of the pornography trade.

○

I was readopted last Friday in my realigned West Lewisham constituency without opposition; but not before my General Council very nearly passed a resolution criticising the NEC for giving them little alternative

but to take me. (It wasn't *me*, they said, it was the principle.) Most of my colleagues have leapt effortlessly over this second reselection hurdle. Suddenly, it seems to be Tories who are squabbling over seats, from the boarding houses of Clwyd to the bovine pastures of Suffolk. This should surprise no one. Though it doesn't come out in the press, when the knives are out they're immensely more efficient at being nasty and treacherous than we are. Some of them have learnt how to do it in boardroom takeover battles – but, to most of them, it comes naturally. Labour, on the other hand, gets so often tarred with a worse reputation than it deserves. That's why I wish the ILEA Labour Group, having had their palace revolution and dispatched their leader Sir Ashley Bramall two years ago, could leave well alone. But I see that Bryn Davies, the favourite son of the Left when Ashley went, is himself now in jeopardy, with Ms Frances Morrell as the new heir apparent. ILEA have done themselves a lot of good in resisting the Heseltine axe; I don't believe that shuffling the pack leftwards and aping French revolutionaries does anything to improve their image.

○

This week we also pushed through a number of Consolidation Bills – they don't contain anything new, just make the law easier to understand. The bulkiest of all was the Mental Health Bill and I direct the attention of my colleagues to Clause 141, which describes what happens when MPs go crazy. Up until a year ago, the system was that we were examined at six-monthly intervals by the President of the Royal College of Physicians and if, on the second occasion, we were still deemed to be ill, we were out. Last year we switched Royal Colleges – to the Psychiatrists – and I was the only member on the Committee to vote against the change. When it all gets too much for me, I would prefer to be sent on my way by a real doctor.

ROGER WODDIS

Strictly for the birds

A prospective Conservative parliamentary candidate in Cambridgeshire, who was rejected by his local party because of his wife's opposition to blood sports, claimed in his defence that he had often shot starlings.

I cannot for the life of me
Imagine why they turned me down
And gave me such a godalmighty grilling;
It's true I earn a lawyer's fee
But though I'm more at home in town,
They couldn't say I wasn't keen on killing.

The manly sport of which I speak
Was in an orchard where I waged
A bloody war against marauding starlings.
I bagged a thousand birds a week,
And though all heaven must have raged,
I eagerly despatched the little darlings.

To love all creatures great and small
But still prefer to see them dead
Is one of life's more mystic paradoxes.
There's glory in a starling's fall,
But damn fool me, I should have said
My policy was nuking stags and foxes.

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FOREIGN NEWS: WEST GERMANY

Standing up to the counters

Just as we were going to press, the West German Federal Constitutional court ruled that the census, scheduled for 27 April, would not be held. Because of its value in understanding the background to this decision, we have kept in most of Tony Paterson's article describing the campaign against the census.

Cologne

THE CENSUS is the first since 1970 and Chancellor Kohl's right-wing interior minister, Friedrich Zimmermann, has said that there will be no 'going back' on the 1,000 million DM (£250 million) project that will, in the government's view, provide vital statistics essential for proper welfare planning and for combating soaring unemployment, now at a post-war record of 2.5 million. But the census has unnerved an unprecedentedly large number (74 per cent, according to recent opinion polls) of West Germans, across the political spectrum, who are concerned that it will provide the authorities with the potential to turn the country into the Orwellian 'big brother' state a year ahead of 1984. Already, some 300 'boycott' groups have been organised.

The questions citizens will be obliged to answer, on pain of a maximum DM10,000 (£2,500) fine, have been prepared with teutonic thoroughness. They ask individuals to state religion, whether they receive social security, whether they are unemployed or have access to secondary accommodation and even whether they have an outside or inside lavatory. Many of those who say that they will boycott the census are opposed to it on the grounds that these questions are an invasion of privacy. Others point to more disturbing effects. They fear that police will use the answers to prosecute thousands who have avoided compulsory West German military service, received undeclared rent or more social security than their entitlement, or have given false information to the registration authorities.

Munich city council has already set an unpleasant precedent by offering a DM2.50 (75p) reward, or *Kopfgeld,* to census takers who manage to root out any West German who has failed to register with the police. The reward offered for each unregistered *foreigner* caught is double, at DM5 (£1.50) a head. The official reason for this remarkable offer is that it is more difficult to search out foreigners.

The government has declared that it wishes to achieve two objectives through the census. The first is to gather statistics on population growth and lifestyles with the intention of properly planning future medical care, social services, housing and industrial projects. The second is to fill gaps in the country's register of inhabitants. The combination of these two aims has resulted in an unorthodox census form that does not separate, as in previous British censuses, the name of the individual from the wealth of personal statistics provided.

Camera Press

Big Brother Zimmermann

Although Herr Zimmermann has publicly guaranteed that the information gathered will not be available to the police and that the names of individuals will be separated from the statistical information before it is fed into state computers, past experience provides few reassuring examples that his promise will be kept. Although they should have been destroyed, original questionnaires from previous censuses (1961 and 1970) are still stored at the Central Statistical Office in Wiesbaden, with names and addresses of inhabitants. The information gained from the previous censuses has been fed into computers, but the correct computer coding enables the original form to be identified in a matter of seconds.

Nor is there any guarantee that the information will be withheld from the police, despite the existence in West Germany of special 'data protection' officials, employed in the 1970s to prevent abuse of state-held-statistics. Experience in Hamburg, for example, has shown that police were able to force the local electricity board to reveal the computerised names and addresses of customers for the purpose of tracking down terrorists. A recent test carried out by a West German television magazine proved how easy it was to track down an individual without knowing his or her name, simply by piecing together the information contained in the answers to census questions.

By far the most ominous consequence of the census, however, is the authorities' intention to identify census boycotters and store their credentials on a separate 'protesters' data bank. According to *Der Spiegel* journalist Jochen Bölsche, an expert on the uses and abuses of state computer data, the authorities aim to categorise boycotters according to their degree of reluctance to complete census forms and pay the resultant fines. 'By 1984, the Federal Republic will be the first state in the history of mankind to have gathered information on virtually the entire spectrum of potential protest with names and details about the individual's degree of protest. This is not despite the boycott movement but directly because of it,' Bölsche says.

West Germans have perhaps more reason than any other Europeans to be concerned about the forthcoming census. As a group of 300 workers at a Gütersloh Hospital in North Germany recently complained: 'Forty-three years ago a census was taken here – it resulted in the deaths of 950 patients at our hospital.' □

CHINA

235,820,002 cannot read

Jonathan Mirsky looks at startling census results

ONE OF THE MOST striking revelations in the recently released Chinese census is that one in four of the population cannot read. More than 30 years after Mao Zedong and his comrades came to power, 235,820,002 Chinese remain illiterate.

By no means all of them are eager to read. In a country where learning was traditionally venerated and is held by the followers of Deng Xiaoping to be the secret of modernisation, peasants increasingly keep their children out of the classroom. Students still in school beat up their teachers and wreck the buildings, a sinister sign in China, where school violence is one of the blackest memories of the Cultural Revolution.

Now Peking has conceded that only 60 per cent of China's children complete primary school, and that less than half of these reach the low final standard. It is a far cry from the days when Communist propaganda gave the impression that illiteracy, like prostitution and female infanticide, had been eradicated. Photographs of toddlers teaching granny to read, and peasants studying while they toiled behind their oxen, caused foreigners to believe that virtually every Chinese person could grasp the front page of the *Peoples Daily*.

Why the dropouts? One explanation is that China apportions only 1.12 per cent of its gross national product to education. This

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places it 110th on the UN education list, behind Guatemala and Somalia. As they glide along the tourist channels, foreigners do not see how backward most Chinese schools are. Those they see appear spartan, but well-disciplined and efficient.

At the grassroots, the schools often appear useless. A reporter in Henan, one of the poorer provinces with a population of 75 million, noted falling school attendance. 'I was shocked to find that out of 200 children enrolled in one school in 1979, only 60 are left,' he wrote. 'Along the roads I saw many ten year olds working in the fields next to adults, rather than going to school.'

Half the rural children in Shhanxi province have left school early; over 24 per cent of its nearly 29 million people cannot read. In Sichuan, whose population of 100 million could make it the eighth most populous country on earth, 24 per cent are illiterate. One school district of 230,710 primary students reported that only 15,000 passed the final examination.

After years of Maoist austerity, it now seems to the peasants that there are more valuable things for a child to do than study. Unlike subsidised urban schools, rural ones are not cheap. Communes support their own education and peasants with several children pay out a big slice of their income for meagre results in ramshackle buildings with half-trained teachers, who are accused of moonlighting in the fields to make money.

THE LURE OF THE FIELDS is great. Peasants are being officially exhorted 'to become rich' by exercising private initiative. (*NS* 9 July 1982). Since it is clear that the more hands on the plough the richer the family, schooling looks like a poor investment. Very few country children make it as far as upper-middle school, which alone is the passport to non-manual work.

As one Chinese journalist, in an unusual example of investigative reporting, put it last summer, 'Unless we take effective measures . . . the system will produce more illiterates and semi-illiterates.' Peasant literacy is defined as the ability to read 1,500 characters, not nearly enough to read the newspaper, and about half the number acquired in a good western BA Chinese course.

But what has really staggered Chinese reporters is school vandalism. In Hunan province, schools have been dismantled and teachers sworn at and battered. Looters stole the teachers' beds in one primary school. In the same town, ten of the 25 middle schools have been stripped of all fittings, including the lightbulbs. After a peasant wedding in a primary school, 240 benches vanished and students had to stand during their lessons. At least one provincial Party committee has ordered an enquiry into school-wrecking 'which displays contempt for teachers and for education'.

Although Deng and his colleagues claim that education lifts children from the paddy into the elite, the Maoist legacy of anti-intellectualism, which crippled education for a decade, lingers in the countryside. Before the 1949 communist triumph, 80 per cent of China's adults were illiterate, but the Party's vainglorious claims have, until recently, clouded the true, slow pace of progress. The Chinese may be more literate than Indians and Pakistanis, but they are less so than Thais, Taiwanese and South Koreans.

Profound inequalities make Chinese illiteracy inevitable. Like all poor countries, China has wrestled with the widening gap in development between city and country, richer and poorer areas, the elite and the rest, men and women. Nowadays, Mao's lipservice to egalitarianism is dismissed by the technocratic Dengists, who maintain that it only encourages mediocrity, as 'eating out of the same pot'.

Continuing – and now subtly justified – inequalities are found at every level of Chinese society. There are only 4,414,493 university graduates in the population of over one billion, according to the recent census. 330,000 of them live in Peking. Other regional inequalities are just as illuminating. In Guangdong, a rich province, only 16 per cent of the population is illiterate, well below the national average. Yunnan, a poor province, is well over the norm with 34 per cent. Party members and senior bureaucrats have access to better schools for their children. Females are less fortunate: less of them start primary school, and they win only one quarter of the coveted university places.

But rural backwardness is China's greatest area of injustice, where illiteracy, like female infanticide, continues to be a national disgrace. Despite Mao's rhetorical reverence for peasants during the Cultural Revolution, it was plain to them that when the Chairman wanted to humiliate his adversaries he sent them 'down to the countryside,' which they fled as soon as they were rehabilitated. Peasant life remains the ruling group's vision of punishment.

This contempt for the rural people who make up 80 per cent of the population can be measured by Peking's paltry investment in their education. For peasants, learning to read is no path to preferment, so they keep their children in the fields where they can help earn colour TVs and mechanical cultivators from Japan. And they greet the Party's call for 'higher spiritual civilization' by wrecking their schools. □

Dr Issam Sartawi

Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

Dialogue in practice: Dr Uri Avneri, (left) from Israel and Dr Issam Sartawi share a platform in London.

Dr Issam Sartawi, a member of the Palestine National Council and leading advocate of dialogue with Israel, was assassinated on 10 April. This March, Dr Sartawi was interviewed in London by Barry Cohen for the *New Statesman* – the last interview recorded with him for an English journal before he was killed. In it, he spoke of the direction he believed the Palestinians must take. It was the expression of such views which the Abu Nidal group was trying to destroy. Dr Sartawi said:

'We have to be extremely courageous and realistic about ourselves, that we don't have any options. We are only being offered physical and political annihilation, therefore we have to create alternative options out of nothing. This is part of my dilemma, and this in part accounts for my lonely fight for so many years. Now I do believe that this vision is being shared by a widening circle of Palestinian public opinion.'

He warned against the Palestinian movement being 'over-anxious to maintain a consensus' which could only produce the 'politics of paralysis.' Instead, he believed, it has to become more democratic and evolve towards the 'majority concept.'

The interview was published in the *New Statesman* on 11 March 1983.

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EGYPT

Copts go in fear

Discrimination against Copts is official, and threatening, reports Amanda Mitchison

Cairo

POPE SHENOUDA III, the firebrand orator and 'divinely' ordained head of the Coptic Orthodox church, was in the public eye again this week when Coptic lawyers contesting the legality of his dethronement before the Council of State, at least secured his release from house arrest.

The Pope had been under house arrest in the desert monastery of Bishoi since the religious upheavals of 1981 which culminated in President Sadat's assassination. The Pope's detainment, and the banning of Coptic newspapers, were deeply resented by the 6 million strong community which has seen little improvement in its position since President Mubarak took office. The Copts are worried by the government's gradual release of suspected Islamic fundamentalists (including the father of Islambouli, head of the 'Al Jihad' organisation which plotted the overthrow of the state).

'Christians don't get their rights in anything at all,' claimed the wife of a Coptic priest. Her husband's congregation prayed in the street when his church was closed down for three years. In 1973, he went to give a service in a country parish and arrived to find the church burnt down and five Christians killed. He was rescued from the Muslim brothers after he had been tied up and beaten. Nowadays, he says, sectarian feeling has quietened down, but the situation is still dangerous. Although there have been no reported incidents of violence against Copts since Mubarak came to power, the Christian community is still frightened that Muslim-Copt clashes – such as the battle in the Cairo suburb of Az Zawiya Al Hamra, in 1981, which left 14 dead and more than 50 wounded – could break out again. The community feels unprotected by the government, which has brought nobody to trial for charges related to the burning of churches, kidnapping and violence against Copts. There are reports that three-quarters of the priests have arms, some provided by the Ministry of the Interior itself.

The lower and middle-class Copts, who consider themselves the original inhabitants of Egypt, are also angry about government discrimination and censorship. (Copts constitute up to 20 per cent of the Egyptian population.) Mosques receive free electricity and water, while a licence, now impossible to get, is needed before a church can be built. Islamic marriage and divorce rulings encourage Copts to convert. A Christian man, in order to marry a Muslim, must convert to Islam, and a Christian woman, although allowed to retain her religion when she marries a Muslim, loses the custody of her children in a divorce and is not eligible to inherit her husband's estate.

Because of discrimination in universities and government, many Copts have turned to the private sector for employment. Foreign bankers record that up to 80 per cent of their employees are Copts. Association with foreign companies and embassies may have exacerbated friction with the Muslim brothers, who consider Western influence corrupting.

Since the Pope's internment, there has been no public protest about treatment of this very devout but inward looking community. Only the Copts abroad (especially in the United States where they number about 100,000) have been protesting. The committee of five bishops appointed by the government to act in place of Shenouda has had American priests defrocked for stirring up protest. In the case of one of them, Father Marcos El-Askiti, the excommunication order was subsequently challenged and invalidated by Pope Shenouda. But whether the Pope supports protest is unknown, for while Copts claim that he was unwillingly under house arrest and wished to return to Cairo, Bishop Gregorios of the 'Papal Committee' described the armed guard round Bishoi monastery as 'protecting the Pope from more assassination attempts'.

Popperfoto

Pope Shenouda III – free but dethroned

The Copts' secular leaders fear another outburst of violence ('The government is uncovering new fundamentalist arms caches every week,' one said). While they are putting pressure on the priests not to provoke trouble, they have gained no more than verbal assurances from the government.

Both at the New Delhi Non-aligned Summit and in his successful management of the handing over of Sinai, President Mubarak has impressed the Western media. The rank and file of his own Coptic community is less impressed. While he attempts to re-enter the Arab fold, and still maintain Camp David, Mubarak must also strike a balance acceptable to Copts and Muslims at home. □

WEST BANK

In league for Israel

Scandal is undermining the new village leagues, reports Alan George

WHEN ISRAEL began setting up its system of village leagues among West Bank Palestinians two years ago, the objective was to create a respectable 'moderate' local leadership that might counter the influence of the elected Palestinian mayors who are vociferous nationalists and supporters of the PLO. Israel's claim that the village leagues constitute a creditable alternative leadership has never been taken seriously by the international community, and it is now being further undermined by a series of scandals involving league officials and members.

The leagues, sponsored and financed by the Israelis, profess opposition to the occupation of the West Bank, but openly collaborate with it. Originally it was claimed that they were merely innocent associations concerned with social and economic development projects. But the scope of their overtly political activities has expanded rapidly, at the expense of the authentic Palestinian leadership in the municipalities. Many administrative responsibilities, for example the issuing of permits for travel abroad, have been transferred from the towns to the leagues.

Most importantly, however, the leagues have been encouraged to set up an armed militia. Ostensibly this was for self-defence: village league members have been a prime target for assassinations. But the militia has been actively employed intimidating West Bankers into joining the leagues, and last month, for the first time ever, Israel used the league militia to impose a curfew on the 40,000 residents of the town of Jenin, following street protests at the poisoning of girls in local schools.

The leading light of the village leagues has been Mustapha Dudin, who was Jordanian Interior Minister at the time of King Hussein's onslaught against the PLO during Black September in 1970. His abject failure in the region's 1976 municipal elections revealed that he had no spontaneous support in the West Bank. Yet in 1981, he became the chairman of the first West Bank village league, in Hebron, and became the head of the new federation of village leagues set up last year. His successor in Hebron, Muhammad Nasser, has however been too much of an embarrassment even for the Israelis. On 28 February he was fired by Brigadier-General Shlomo Ilya, who is responsible for non-military affairs in the West Bank.

Nasser's downfall can be traced back to 19 June last year, when the militia of the He-

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bron village league opened fire on residents of the village of Beit Kahil, south of Hebron, who were protesting at the league's efforts to assert its authority over them. Daoud Atawneh, a 24-year-old teacher, was killed and seven other villagers were wounded. Nasser was arrested after the incident, and a police enquiry was launched. But the Israeli military authorities intervened on behalf of their man – the police investigation was suspended and Nasser was freed.

Evidently, the Israelis finally concluded that Nasser was too much of a liability. When he was sacked, the reasons given were that he had 'mishandled' finances and appointments. But it can be no coincidence that the investigation into Daoud Atawneh's murder has now been re-opened. Only six days after Nasser was dismissed, it was disclosed that the leader of the Ramallah village league, Jamil Khatib, his brother Riyad, and several league members, were to face trial on charges of aggravated assault, illegal arrest and illegal interrogation.

THE CHARGES arise from incidents last August involving intimidation of six opponents of the leagues in the villages of Qataneh and Biddo. One of the six, Fahmi Ater Khader, a building worker from Biddo, needed eight days' hospitalisation after being seized from his home at 11 o'clock one night and beaten for two hours. Musa al Sus, a villager from Qataneh, had teeth knocked out while undergoing interrogation in Jamil Khatib's house.

Like Nasser's case in Hebron, a police investigation into the villagers' complaints was halted through the intervention of the Israeli military authorities. It was re-opened only after the case was mentioned during an Israeli television report last October on the misdemeanours of the village leagues. Journalist Gil Sadan, who prepared the report, has confirmed that the army was 'not happy' at the resumption of the police enquiry.

Palestinians co-operating with the Israeli military authorities were also the subject of a forgery, theft and embezzlement case that opened in Ramallah magistrates' court in January. When the Israelis dismissed the elected mayor of the city in March last year, because of his nationalist stance, they appointed Moshe Biton, an Israeli official, to act in his place. Town hall employees went on strike to protest their mayor's dismissal, and Biton had to recruit Palestinians prepared to work under him. Among these were Atta Khalil and Suheil Laham, who were appointed as tax collector and assistant accountant, respectively.

On 1 November, the town hall workers returned to work and discovered financial irregularities relating to the period of the strike action. An investigation concluded with Suheil Laham admitting that he had embezzled $4,760, of which $1,650 had been spent on a car and $330 to take his wife on holiday to the Israeli Red Sea resort of Eilat. Atta Khalil denied charges of embezzlement, but nevertheless returned $280 to the municipality from his own pocket. The full amount stolen by the two men has yet to be determined.

Israel may be embarrassed over the calibre of its creatures in the West Bank, but there is no sign that the leagues will be abandoned. In an Israeli radio interview on 29 March, Brigadier General Ilya reaffirmed his committment to the leagues, saying that they 'stand for co-existence and dialogue'. □

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ Being born a prince was just like being born into the life of an engineer or a technician, Prince Edward said yesterday. – *Daily Telegraph* (Jon Simmons)

☐ A 28-year-old man was jailed for seven days yesterday for whispering in the public gallery of a magistrates' court in London. – *Guardian* (P. W. R. Foot)

☐ Learn 'snob' English, taught by an aristocrat of ancient lineage, to be acceptable in cultured circles. – Personal ad in *Daily Telegraph* (G. Moor)

☐ Quietlynn Ltd, owner of a sex shop in Chapeltown road, Leeds, is also considering an appeal. At the hearing before the sub-committee Mr Michael Kaye, for Quietlynn, said that the firm had sent two crates of materials to troops in the Falklands to raise their morale. – *Guardian* (Stephen Craig)

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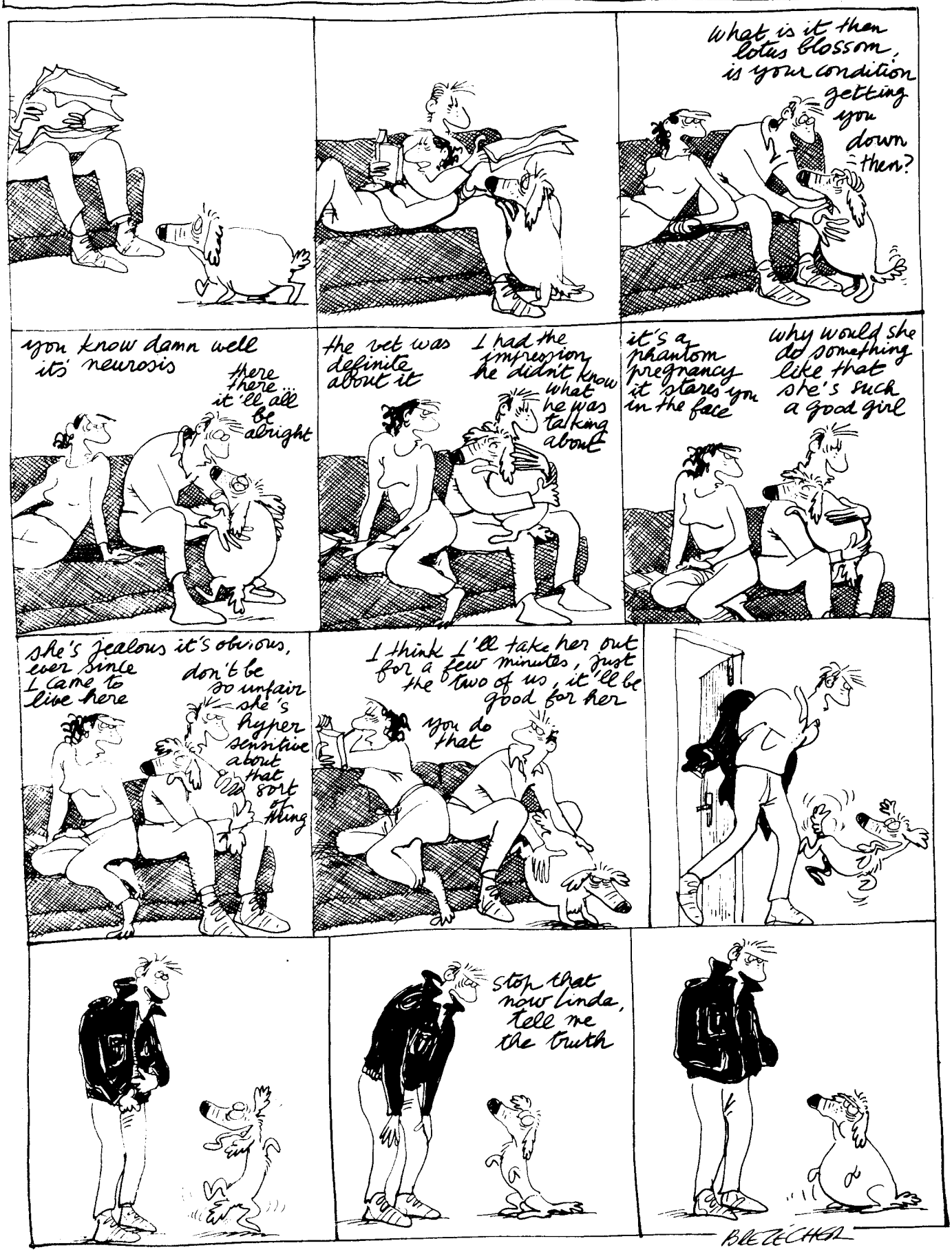
BRETECHER

LINDA


what is it then Lotus Blossom, is your condition getting you down then?
you know damn well it's neurosis
there there it'll all be alright
the vet was definite about it
I had the impression he didn't know what he was talking about
it's a phantom pregnancy it stares you in the face
why would she do something like that she's such a good girl
she's jealous it's obvious, ever since I came to live here
don't be so unfair she's hyper sensitive about that sort of thing
I think I'll take her out for a few minutes, just the two of us, it'll be good for her
you do that
stop that now Linda, tell me the truth
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

It never Raines but it pours

R. Rubin, London NW3

It was with disbelief that I read (*NS* 8 April) a piece entitled 'Arsehole' by one Craig Raine. This must surely rank as one of the most tasteless pieces of 'verse' ever to be published in this country in what purports to be a responsible journal.

Regrettably, I see it as yet another symptom in the sad decline of what was once a diverting and discriminating weekly, whatever one's political views.

Perhaps now that you have hit rock bottom (pun intended), might we hope that things can only improve, and that we may see the beginning of a return to your old standards?

Christophe Maslanka, Oxford

Craig Raine's unfortunate experience over his translation of the sonnet by Verlaine-Rimbaud and his being attacked for obscenity reminds me of the time I undertook to translate from the Greek the whole of N. T. Coproe's giant epic 'Pitsinoulis'.

No sooner had I Englished it up to the last line (by which stage my work should have been an oeuvre) than I realised with a flash of horror that it was obscene. I quickly turned the light off and translated it back into Greek in case Aunt Wispidistra should see it and disinherit me.

For the next few years I translated it back and forth between these two languages and on one occasion even rendered it into fluent pidgin Polish. Until one day, to my great relief, I found that the sense of the poem had drifted so far from the original that it was no longer about ghastly people such as homosexuals, but about fairies, rabbits, flowers and wholesome things.

My tamperings with great literature ended there. A psychologist showed conclusively that at a deeper level the translation was about bestiality in the Rococo Islands and would encourage cannibalism among coin collectors. In the ensuing scandal I was disinherited. Mr Coproe himself snubbed me at a cocktail party when I showed him the fold-out version of the book. He fixed me with an icy stare and said, 'This work should be obscene and not absurd.' I now write television jingles and they are both. I therefore advise Mr Raine and the *New Statesman* to stick to their guns.

Family incomes

Paul Ashton, St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex

In common with the protagonists he writes of, Peter Kellner (*NS* 8 April) refers to Minford's and Kay's and Morris's statistics as relating to the number of 'families' that are financially better off out of work. What their respective figures refer to, however, is the percentage of *households* with very high replacement ratios.

It is this extravagant use of the term 'family' that often confuses the layman when faced with statistics which actually include spouseless and/or childless households. And it is this confusion, coupled with a narrow concentration on those who are actually better off out of work, which hides the more stark figures relating to the unemployment trap.

If we look at the proportion of families with dependent children who have out-of-work incomes of 80 per cent, or more, of their in-work incomes, even Minford's high figures begin to pale into insignificance. The DHSS's 1978 cohort study of unemployed men revealed that 37 per cent of families with one or two children had high (over 80 per cent) replacement ratios, as did 53 per cent of those with three or more children. The proportions today, given the changes in the tax and benefit systems since 1978, are likely to be higher still.

Given these figures, and given that the unemployment trap affects mainly those with dependent children, the case for widening the still-narrow gap between in and out of work incomes for (real) families, by increasing child benefit, is a strong one.

Breakfast TV

Tony Crabb, Managing Editor, Breakfast Time, BBC

Those of your readers who watch the BBC's *Breakfast Time* will know how wrong Bob Woffinden was last week (*NS* 8 April) when he asserted that Breakfast Television has won its anticipated audience by 'de-emphasising heavily the news content of the programmes'.

Regular comprehensive bulletins of national and international news make up nearly half an hour of the two and a half hour programme. Important stories are developed elsewhere in the programme, newspapers are reviewed twice, three spots are devoted to sports news, and ten minutes of local news and traffic information is put out on a regional basis.

The friendly and informal presentation of *Breakfast Time* should not mislead anyone – least of all a writer on the media – into thinking that we do not take seriously the job of providing a fast, accurate and full service of news and information to our morning viewers.

A wider vision

Dora Russell, Porthcurno, Cornwall

I regret to see Liz Heron (*NS* 1 April) seeking to contain women's struggle for freedom and the assertion of their values within the narrow limits of socialism (represented, I take it, by the Labour Party).

When women got the vote, there was talk of a special 'women's party'. Instead, women joined the existing parties whose structure and version of politics had been formed by men. Within these, women found themselves still in subjection: their conferences not reported, their requests opposed or shelved. Only last year, all the women's demands were overridden by the Trade Union block votes in the Party Conference. And a typical 'party woman' (as they all become), Mrs Dunwoody, referred to her sex, which is half the human race, and more than half the electorate, as a 'mere sectional interest' – or words to that effect. If men do not respect equality in partnership they should not be surprised when women decide to 'go it alone'.

In fact the women's movement, with all its various facets, represents today something which, quite literally, has never before been heard in history – the voice of women defending life on earth and demanding an end to the wilful misuse and destruction of the human species. This is not an emotional digression into peace activities. It is what women have thought and felt for centuries, but were too cowed and oppressed to be able to say.

All our political parties are still unaware that they themselves are back numbers, prisoners of vocabularies of ideologies, -isms and policies, within the mechanics of the industrial revolution, which no longer work. The vision of Karl Marx and marxism was limited to industrial society as seen in England. Spread to countries where it did not apply, it has impeded true human progress.

The upsurge of women today and such movements as CND represent a wider vision and a profound change of purpose, which, if we survive, will create a new shape both in political and personal life.

Asbestos in the home

James Stewart, Cardiff

Councillor English (Letters 8 April) accuses me of distorting statistical evidence, saying that my article (*NS* 11 March) contained 'half truths and unchecked facts'.

The reduction of the occupational standard for white asbestos to one fibre per ml from January 1983 should have been included in my article. It shows how the industry is being forced to accept the dangers of asbestos in relatively high concentrations for *short* periods. It does not shed any light on the dangers of long-term, constant exposure to low levels in the home. I regret the omission of this point, but it is a red herring.

Cllr English's third paragraph admits that Cardiff City Council is taking as a standard for *domestic* exposure (long-term, constant) a level of 0.1 fibres per ml for white asbestos. Yet, as he acknowledges, the US NIOS&H as long ago as 1976 recommended this as a maximum, *occupational* level for an eight-hour period. The NIOS&H said this could not be considered a 'safe' level and went on: 'Evaluation of all available human data provides no evidence for a threshold or "safe" level of asbestos exposure . . .' Cllr English's own officer stated: 'There is no threshold below which disease can be ruled out.' (See my article.)

It is all very well for Cllr English to qualify the HSC's comment that 'the existence of a risk to health can neither be confirmed nor denied'. This was quoted to the Trowbridge tenants by his chief executive without any qualifications as to levels and is entirely consistent with the evidence cited above that there is no safe level.

I repeat that tests done for SWAT (by the Tenovus cancer research laboratories at the University Hospital of Wales) found no trace of asbestos in samples from the boiler cupboards. They found asbestos in samples from the flues. Unfortunately, a paragraph was cut from my article which explained that the Health and Safety Commission had found asbestos in the heat exchangers of gas-fired hot air systems. I would be interested to know whether Cardiff City Council has checked the heat exchangers in its houses.

Cllr English is trying to raise a smokescreen over this issue and his comments will do nothing to reassure tenants in council houses which contain asbestos. I have quoted the evidence – from the city council, among others – that there is *no safe level*. Is Cllr English prepared to give the tenants he represents a categorical assurance that they have nothing to fear?

My article did not aim to scare people. It reported widespread concern around Britain – concern shared by the AMA, the GMWU and numerous tenants' groups. Cardiff City Council took months even to acknowledge a letter from the Trowbridge tenants expressing their fears and asking for information. The article raised a question, to which Cllr English has no answer: what is the effect of constant, long-term exposure to low levels of asbestos in the home?

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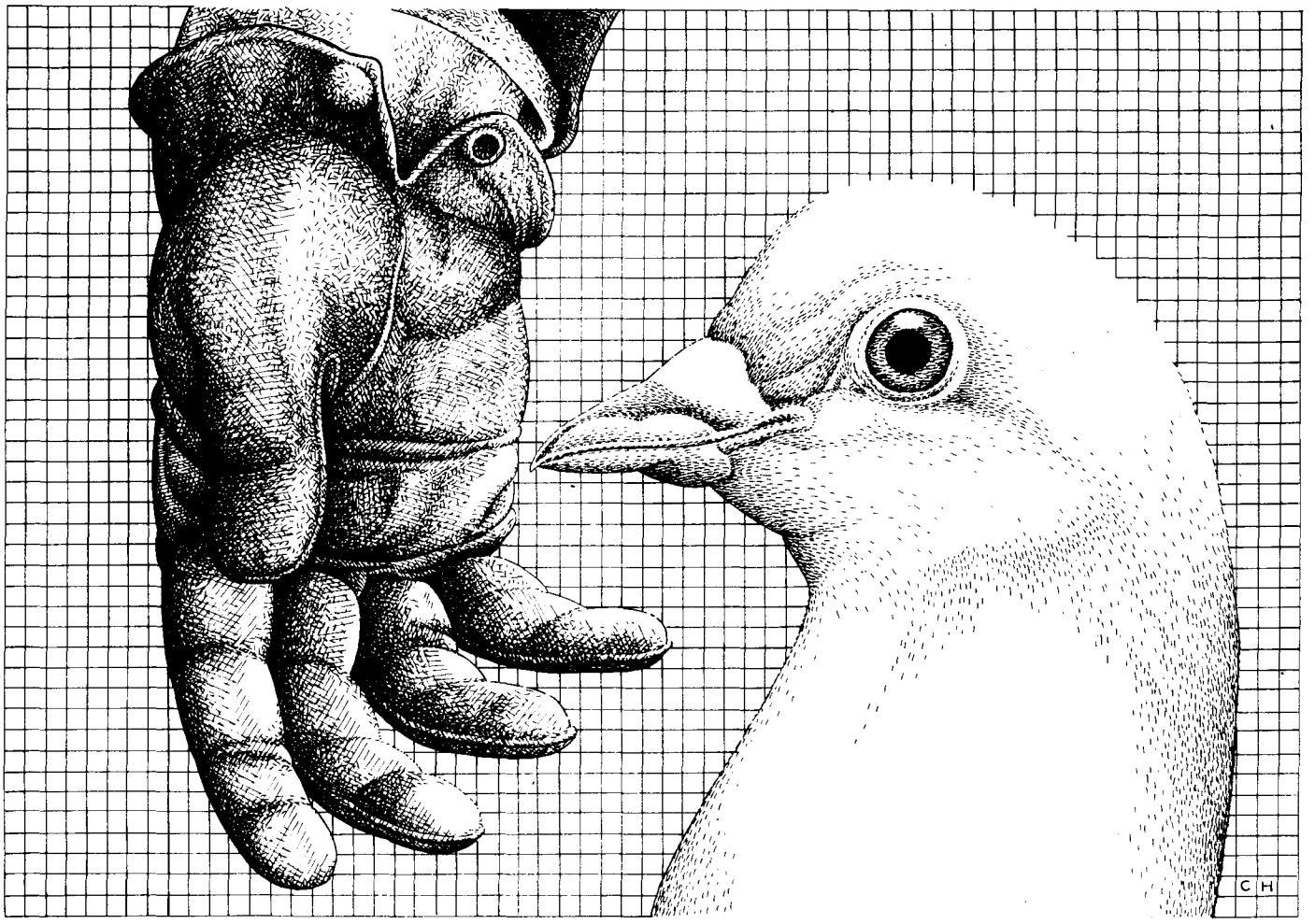

Cliff Harper

Excerpt from a new novel

by

Francis Stuart

Waking at six-thirty, I'm washed, dressed and having breakfast of café-au-lait, a boiled duck egg (our concièrge keeps a dozen waterfowl), wheaten bread and honey by soon after seven. I'm not a food faddist and would as soon have a slice from the creamy white loaf well-spread with margarine and marmalade, but the madame downstairs arranges a weekly delivery of choice (hers) comestibles, and I've enough other matters to concern me to leave these alone.

This morning, though, having finally got home and to bed at three a.m., I'd set the alarm for eight o'clock. Then it was an anxious scanning of the newspaper. 'Night of Terror' (an exaggeration of course). 'Bombs Wreck Newspaper Offices, Several Defused' (at most, two). 'Curfew Imposed on City' (yes). 'Army Takes Over Security' (more about that from the horse's mouth).

There was nothing about the device at the Hotel Marina, to which nobody knew of course that the offices of our magazine had been transferred after its banning.

I jumped up (where was my usual composure?) at unusual sounds from the normally quiet and leafy street. From the fourth-floor living room window I saw a couple of long-grey-coated motor-cyclists stopped in the roadway opposite the entrance to the apartment block, booted feet on the tarmac, their engines running.

Were they come to arrest me and had the telephone call from the colonel's aide been to ensure I was at home at the time for which the fake appointment was made? No, I was fabricating unlikely dangers instead of recollecting myself for the vital confrontation.

There appeared from under the canopy of tenderly green, young leaves a squat grey car, by no means impressive, a triangular pennant with a black star on a red background (the airforce emblem, was it?) sprouting from the bonnet.

I went back to the hall and waited at the apartment door for the sound of the lift. Of course I was too soon. I tend to be early everywhere and so am exposed to unnecessary waiting, a wearing process that has left its mark.

When finally I opened the door it was to a young man in a dark suit. Had he climbed the four flights, I'd heard no sound from the lift? If so, he was in excellent shape, not a trace of breathlessness.

– Mr Spokane?

– At your service.

Those of course were not my actual words. Sometimes in this report, as between the strictly verbatim method and the subjective, I choose the latter as being the account with the vital dimension added.

He stood aside and Colonel Klotz stepped from the lift, behind whose grilled door he'd been waiting. He was wearing an undistinguished grey airforce uniform, without ribbons, medals or medallions of any kind, with just the three faded silver stripes across the shoulder straps to indicate his rank.

Francis Stuart's Black List Section H *was re-issued last year as a King Penguin.*

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– Good morning, sir.

– Honoured.

The 'sir' hadn't helped restore my composure. What did it portend? Was it meant ironically? Or as a threat? As, say, in the context where captor says to captive during a preliminary interrogation: 'Now, sir, let's have no more prevarication . . .'? But no, I concluded later, it was a military mode he used in addressing those he saw as possible allies. When he dropped it, it would be the time to worry.

I took him into the sitting room, followed by the aide-de-camp or secretary, and instead of choosing one of the comfortable chairs I'd set out, he sat on an upright one at the table, forcing me to take a similar one at the other side and turning my idea (a wishful one) of a friendly visit to discuss the banning of the magazine into a formal interview. Against this interpretation, the young man lolled back in one of the armchairs, completely at ease. But, instinct told me, armed and alert to the last nerve and muscle. He was surveying my bookshelves. (For signs of subversive literature? God almighty, I was in a state of over-responsiveness, imagining all sorts of conflicting signs and omens.)

– There you are, Paul, the Colonel said to him, plenty of books like I told you. You know, Mr Spokane, I'm not much of a reader. We Generals, Colonels and Corporals seldom are, but I've Captain Weismann to make up for that.

– What about de Gaulle, Colonel?

– An excellent question, sir, that brings us right to the point. General de Gaulle called France's writers the nation's conscience, whereas under Hitler their books were burnt, and Franco banished his lot. Isn't that so, Paul?

– De Gaulle never forgave the collaborators, some of whom, like Céline, were condemned to death.

– Hmm. The Captain was evidently not just a 'yes' man.

– Céline, who's she? Let's not get sidetracked. The point is that the writers have the last word; it's they, not the dictators, who compose the history books.

I saw, confusedly, what he was getting at.

– Had Stalin managed to get the Russian intelligentsia behind him what a different situation we'd have now!

– He didn't make much of an attempt to do so, Colonel.

– At least he was in awe of them, which the jumped-up Austrian corporal never was.

– That's true. Hitler basically was a nobody: a banal, gossipy old dame. Tie an apron round his waist and he'd have looked the part. Art means nothing to such people.

– A cosy old crone? Is that how you see him, Mr Spokane? But he managed to do for a lot of people, yours among them, eh Paul?

One of the damned and chosen race, I could have talked to the captain about matters undreamed of by Klotz. Yet he had chosen him as an adviser as he was perhaps here to see if I was available in another capacity.

– Imaginative intelligence doesn't usually go with war lords, I suggested.

– And without it history's final approval is withheld.

This time Colonel Klotz looked at me directly. I had to laugh, although it was risky. He was like a child repeating a lesson and taking it very seriously. He burst out laughing too and I knew all was well, but, of course, it wasn't.

Holy Christ, what was that! A faint chirping from the next room but one. Pieta's sick dove, her wounded Bird of Peace that I was caring for while she was in hospital. Rising late that morning, distressed at the happenings of the night before and slightly hungover, swallowing black coffee and scanning the scary headlines, I'd neglected to feed it.

Klotz was back on to Stalin and reminding me that he had tried to make contact with his Russian poets by ringing up one of them and asking about another. Had he read of the incident in *The Kingdom* where we'd printed it, with comments, some months previously? (The Captain had to supply both the names of Pasternak and Mandelstam.)

Writers have the last word; it's they, not the dictators, who compose the history books.

– And this Pasternak character lost a golden opportunity through his miserable timidity and confusion. The great Slav dictator wasn't one to grant second chances.

Was I about to lose a golden opportunity too? Nor would *I* be given a second chance. I knew something of the panic with which Pasternak had taken up the phone, a few minutes after Stalin had banged it down, and rung the Kremlin to no avail.

– Pieta Dolgorouky, who as you may remember, Colonel, was listed as sub-editor on the staff of our magazine, before it was closed down that is (why this rigmarole? had Pasternak's pulse been beating as wildly as mine?), left me this sick creature when she had to go to hospital, and I've just remembered I forgot to feed it this morning.

– What creature are you talking about, sir?

– A bird, Colonel.

– He turned to his aide (bodyguard).

– Is this a joke?

– You'll have to excuse me a few minutes.

I got up and tried to leave the room in a leisurely fashion but I think I was closer to running. On my way through the hall there was a ring at the outer door. I opened it and there was Frank Everek. A miracle, was how I looked on his appearance.

– Good day, Boss. Have I come at an inconvenient time?

He'd seen the military motor-cyclists waiting in the streets and, probably, sentries on each floor of the apartment block; and still had called and didn't bat an eyelid as he put the question. A cool cat, as Kathy had called him. A member of a criminal gang that masqueraded under a political guise; who had, before his imprisonment, worked for us as a part-time distributor of the magazine in a prosperous city suburb which, as I realised later, afforded him the chance to reconnoitre and inform himself about what homes were worth breaking into. Besides which, there were the bored young housewives in the luxury flats, some of whom were not averse to letting him in if he rang instead of slipping the magazine through the letter-box.

– Who have you with you, Boss? His Nibs in person?

Twisted Christ! was Klotz's visit known all over town?

–I've an urgent task for you, Frank, old renegade.

– Not to . . .? No. Only give me the word.

I showed him the cardboard box, the utensils, and opened the lid. The chirping stopped, the bird hopped to the edge of the box, held its head on one side, seeming to take a long, beady look at the newcomer who, in response, held out a forefinger. The fledgling hopped on to it and opened its beak. With it fastened firmly, I conducted Frank to the front room, myself carrying the box, cat's tin and burnt match-stick.

Klotz was standing at the window with his back to the room and the Captain, it struck me, saying something reassuring. But he jumped to his feet the moment he saw Frank.

I was too tense to be clear about details, but I think his hand went to a gun he no doubt had under his jacket.

– Mr Everek, Colonel Klotz, a former helper of ours.

Unlikely he'd recall the trial for armed robbery of a couple of years ago, especially as the case wasn't given any political significance.

Frank stood at the table feeding the bird morsels of cat food speared on the end of the sharpened match.

– Why do you call your publication *The Kingdom*, Mr Spokane?

– It was Miss Dolgorouky's choice, the young lady I told you about. I think it refers

Rivals the best of Stephen King
FEVRE DREAM
George R R Martin
Gollancz £7.95

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to the alternative world or kingdom.

– Think it over, sir, and if you would like to restart it on certain conditions give Captain Weismann a ring.

If only he knew that we were all set to go underground and bring out the first clandestine number in under a week, an adventure that I saw as fraught with the gravest dangers!

Now I would hurry to the hospital with the good news. 'Good news', would Pieta welcome it as such? And I didn't know the conditions, hadn't dared to ask. But the Captain had given me an encouraging look as they departed, or that was how I interpreted it.

The bird was back in its box and quiet, with the lid shut and a clean piece of newspaper, a sheet from *The Kingdom*, at the bottom. I hurried to the hospital by taxi. As I entered the ward I saw that Pieta was conscious. She was propped up in bed and lifted her left hand, with a languor that went to my heart, a few inches from the white bedspread.

I moved the tall table on rubber castors to slip into the narrow space beside the bed and noticed on it, beside a glass of liquid with a straw in it, a small leather-framed portrait of myself. I was shocked, or is 'shaken' the word ('horrified' might be better, 'ashamed and guilt-stricken' better still). Why was it there on that narrow altar? What sacrilege! Or had it been put there by a mysterious, previous visitor to mock and accuse me? I sat down in the chair half turned to the long window.

– Pieta.

A loosening of the corners of her mouth as if it would half open and whisper from wherever she was, but then the pale lips regained their line of repose.

Nurses flitted by on white noiseless wings (shoes); an old woman recited a mumbled litany of holy names and complaints; another, spoon-fed against her will, gurgled and denounced the young sister.

Beyond the window birds were flying in and out of a large, dark tree, of a species I didn't recognise, against a brass-coloured sky. My eyes focused on it and my thoughts gathered round the figure in the bed on my right. My fingers rested on the back of Pieta's hand (it's dark out here, give me your little paw) into the inside of whose wrist the plastic cannula led beneath the bandage. A constant traffic of birds out of the sky and into the great shadow of the tree in its halo of yellow light.

Against all likelihood, solace descended on the white bed, the upturned, suspended bottle of blood, the table and what stood on it, stilling my anxiety as well as the noise of the birds and the mumbled prayers and abuse from behind me.

All is well. I recalled these words from a time long ago, an age more conducive to optimism. They contradicted the small, fearful signs all around me.

Where now was 'the good news'? To have thought that she would welcome it I now saw as a betrayal. The only news that might reassure her somewhat was that the wounded fledgling still survived. □

FICTION – 1
Harriett Gilbert

Time search

In Search of Love and Beauty
RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA *John Murray* £8.50
The Wandering Unicorn
MANUEL MUJICA LAINEZ *Chatto* £8.50 & £4.50
The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde
PETER ACKROYD *Hamish Hamilton* £7.95

Having come to New York in the 1930s, a refugee from Austria, Leo Kellermann establishes himself as a 'psycho-spiritual therapist': a Bacchus figure in a monk's robe 'girdled by a studded cowboy belt'. Aside from collecting the pupils and disciples he collects, he is also the pivot around which turn the lives of three generations (the story spans half a century) of an émigré New York family whose matriarch, Louise, 'adopted' him when he first arrived in the States.

Leo is neither the first 'guru' to feature in Prawer Jhabvala's fiction, nor is he the only one in **In Search of Love and Beauty**. Louise's daughter, Marietta, resentful of Leo's hold on her family, tours the ashrams of India in a desultory quest for the more traditional variety. And this, of course, is the novel's subject – that structureless, restless, enervated, peculiarly Western search for the Meaning of Life. Marietta sometimes pursues it through her passionate love for her son; or in promiscuous sexual relations with middle-class Indian boys. Her son, for his part, looks for it in a quasi-sado-masochistic involvement with a 'wholesome, Anglo-Saxon' stud called Kent. Her mother, Louise, has her complex devotion to Leo; while her mother's friend Reggi trawls the world for face lifts, excitement and servile young men.

The problem is that Prawer Jhabvala is none too sure if her characters are at least *attempting* to do the right thing; or are merely vicious, stupid and absurd. For absorbing the troubles of his followers while pursuing his hedonistic ends, is Leo to be respected or despised? For sacrificing her life to Leo, is Louise a saint or an idiot? Suspended, due to these uncertainties, between social satire and tragedy, the book is uneven, uneasy. The characters are neither grotesque nor attractive enough to engage us; ideas get embarrassed with themselves.

One of the latter – which *half* emerges, then sidles back whence it came – is a juxtaposition of the male 'guru' with the 'matriarch'. Louise, like Leo, has an Indian counterpart – an opulent, middle-aged singer called Sujata (another of Marietta's 'finds') whose extended family clusters around her for comfort, support and identity; just as Louise's family clusters round *her*. And not at all as Leo's disciples, or the followers in the ashrams, are required to abnegate themselves for their teachers.

Taking another perspective, one could say that *In Search of Love and Beauty* is rich with such suggestive images. It is also very important to add (from whatever angle you look at it) that the weaving backward and forward through time, the stage-management of people and events, are performed with Prawer Jhabvala's usual dexterity. The book, for all that, is too unresolved to be one of her most successful.

The Wandering Unicorn is the first novel by the Argentinian Manuel Mujica Lainez to be translated into English. In its confident exploitation of fantasy, it is 'typically South American' – its subject matter, however, is mediaeval Europe. The narrator-heroine is Melusine – fairy, woman, winged servant, founder of the House of Lusignan in Poitou. Cursed by her mother to immortality (her only pastime to flap round the towers and screech on the death of a Lusignan descendant) Melusine one day breaks her boredom by falling in love with a mortal. Since the young man can't see, feel, or hear her, her lust is doomed to frustration – but, in contemporary chivalric fashion, Melusine shrugs off the handicap. (Or *tries* to; she really does fancy him a lot.) The boy, it transpires, is the bastard son of a Lusignan (Melusine shrugs the incest off along with her other problems) and, when his father turns up to reclaim him, the two ride off for the Crusades. Melusine, deserting her watchtower, follows.

Taking established myth and history as his yarn, Mujica Lainez has woven a story as rich as a mediaeval wall-hanging – men become women; fact coincides with fiction; and past and present, religion and magic, art and reality, humour and beauty, East and West intermingle. Having achieved so very much, the tragedy is that he fails to go all the way – to overturn the hideous values to which his characters subscribe. If war, sexism, imperialism and the worship of tradition are mocked, it is, in the end, with too much affectionate indulgence. *The Wandering Unicorn* is beautiful, startling, but tame.

Peter Ackroyd's **The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde** shares, with Mujica Lainez's novel, a basis in 'known fact'. It also questions the frontiers that separate fact from fiction. Wilde, of course, inhabits both countries – the 'fact' of him guaranteed by newspaper stories and (perhaps more safely) the transcript of a couple of trials; the 'fiction' of him an autonomous myth, long since beyond his control, compound of genius and tragedy, heroism and martyrdom.

Reflecting his subject's ambivalent existence, Ackroyd has written a diary of Wilde's last months that is as convincing and 'realistic' as scholarship, sympathy, an ear for language and a writer's craft could produce – then, nine tenths of the way through, has his Wilde destroy his credibility by saying that he has shown his journal to Bosie, who considers it 'full of lies'. Ingenious; amusing. But, if the only voice that we have is that of an 'unreliable narrator' (and Ackroyd's Wilde is so exact a copy of the 'known' Wilde that one voice *is* all we have), what is the point of continuing to listen? Trapped by its own cleverness, the novel turns out to be nothing more than a virtuoso exercise. □

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What Do Women Want?

SUSIE ORBACH and LUISE EICHENBAUM
Michael Joseph £7.95

Despite the dreadful title, I looked forward to reading this book. After all, Susie Orbach certainly managed to cause controversy and debate with *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. Unfortunately, her latest offering is, for the most part, boring and uninspiring.

The authors draw on their work at the Women's Therapy Centre to analyse the complexities of heterosexual relationship. All those complexities, they say, stem from people's dependency needs, which develop from birth and whose parameters are already set by our relationships with our mothers. The rest of the book is then devoted to turgid accounts of various relationships and what goes wrong with them. Not only did I end up with the sinking feeling that all man-woman couples are doomed to failure, but also that mother – yet again – is the one to be blamed.

Some good points are made. They dispel the myth that men are miraculously independent beings, by pointing out that men can *afford* to act independent because they have a back-up system of female nurturers from birth. Meanwhile women learn from the start that they must damn well look after themselves. Only a restructuring of domestic life, so that women *and* men are involved in childcare from the start, say the authors, will take the burden off mother, create less emotionally disabled adults, and narrow the breach between the sexes.

By far the most successful chapter is the one on sex and dependency. No wonder, say the authors, that men are more confident and aggressive sexually: 'Their sexual organ is a fact of their daily experience', something to be physically seen and handled, while 'a woman's sexual organs are hidden from view . . . she is not encouraged to take pride in them'. The heterosexual woman is therefore at a huge disadvantage compared with her partner, conditioned as she is to negate her sense of worth while boosting his.

However, we are given few practical pointers as to how heterosexual couples can change and improve their relationships. Scant attention is given to feminism or lesbianism, both of which, coming together in the women's movement, have created more challenges to the nuclear set-up and more imaginative possibilities for women's lives than you would ever imagine from this book. While it is true that 'millions of women live lives of appalling emotional sterility and dissatisfaction', it is equally true that many have managed to break out of that, because of the feminist revolution.

What Do Women Want?, by failing to answer Freud's question, will not help anyone, male or female, feminist or not, to make more sense of their personal lives.

Barney Bardsley

The Brothers Powys

RICHARD PERCEVAL GRAVES *Routledge* £14.95

For sheer quantity even more than quality, the Powyses stand above all other literary families: of eleven brothers and sisters, seven wrote books, between them producing over 100 titles. Graves concentrates on the three – John Cowper, T.F., and Llewelyn – who were the full-time writers, and whose reputations have endured.

Certainly, their lives were the stuff of fascinating biography. All three weathered numerous personal and professional setbacks. There was constant ill-health and mental turmoil: John, in particular, with a formidable range of obsessions, sounds like a casebook study. As for marriage, only T.F.'s was secure. Almost from the outset, John spent little time with his wife and eventually set up house with another woman; Llewelyn was a compulsive adulterer. Such literary renown as the brothers did achieve during their lifetimes never lasted. T.F.'s novels and Llewelyn's essays enjoyed brief vogues, while John – whose high reputation is entirely posthumous – experienced intermittent success on the American lecture-circuit. Usually, though, it was a case of poor sales and financial headaches.

Unfortunately, as Graves acknowledges, *The Brothers Powys* is substantially incomplete. By far the roundest portrait is that of Llewelyn, simply because he was the brother on whom most information was freely available. Graves was not allowed to quote from the unpublished papers of John and T.F., while various important documents were withheld. Nevertheless, his inevitable reliance on John's discreet *Autobiography*, published in 1934, and Malcolm Elwin's life of Llewelyn (who died in 1939) still seems excessive: the period from 1940 until John's death in 1963 – T.F. had died ten years earlier – is covered by a single chapter of 23 pages. Nor has Graves wholly overcome the structural problems inherent in surveying three separate lives in a unified narrative. Even so, no more satisfactory account is likely until the missing pieces become public property.

David Montrose

JOHN MORTIMER

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FICTION – 2
John Spurling

Quick dives

Djinn
ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET *Calder* £2.95
The Use of Speech
NATHALIE SARRAUTE *Calder* £3.95

The *Nouveau Roman* is no longer *nouveau* and never was much of a cover for writers as disparate as Butor, Simon, Robbe-Grillet and Sarraute. Yet it may still serve to remind us of how very different French fiction, with its theoretical basis and group cohesion, is from our own. In spite of England's being early into this field with Virginia Woolf, most of our novelists are still engaged with the *ancien roman* and we are perfectly content that they should be, just as we didn't really reckon with Impressionism until about half a century after it happened, though our own homely Constable had anticipated it. The comparison is quite a close one, since the newness of the *Nouveau Roman* as well as its initial difficulty consists mainly in a shift of perception.

Almost the only thing that Robbe-Grillet and Sarraute have in common – they are, after all, a generation apart in age – is that their narrative is no longer, as it were, framed on the page but becomes a subjective impression shared by writer and reader in front of the page. A story that begins 'The Marquise went out at five', to use Sarraute's famous example, assumes a fixed viewpoint and demands that writer and reader collude in a particular convention of make-believe reality in which the writer's authority is absolute. Robbe-Grillet's novels are attempts to grapple with the unreliability of objective appearances and the giddy feelings of inadequacy, guilt and suspicion this gives rise to. His usual mode is the detective thriller, his favourite reference the Oedipus story – and his obscurely threatening world often recalls Kafka's. **Djinn** is the mixture much as before, with girls who might be dolls or men, a blind man who isn't blind, and a secret organisation to combat the rule of computers which might after all be the author in cahoots with the reader.

Sarraute's novels go deeper, making Robbe-Grillet's look by comparison only like splintered versions of the kind of old-world fiction we know and love, games with the business of telling a story. Sarraute's conduct us to a world we know very well but have never seen before in such strong colours or with such detailed clarity, the secret world of ordinary human relationships, the sub-text of our actions, conversations and even casual remarks. In Sarraute's world we become as sensitive, vulnerable and dangerous to one another as creatures on the sea-bed – a recurring image – or as the characters in Dostoievsky.

Her latest book, **The Use of Speech**, sounds like a primer and in a sense it is, consisting not of a single extended expedition to the sea-bed like her previous seven novels, but of a series of 10 quick dives, more in the manner of her first book, *Tropisms*, originally published as long ago as 1939. The 'tropisms', however, were briefer, cruder, more external characterisations of human behaviour. *The Use of Speech*, drawing on all Sarraute's intervening experience, goes straight to the heart of her developed method: the truth that can be teased out of an apparently throwaway phrase, 'See you soon', 'And why not?' 'My dear'. In the novels these phrases have become increasingly important, but they are only part of a much denser texture of situation, character and plot, whereas here it is the phrase that is brought into the foreground, offered for inspection and then placed in a suitable illustrative context for proper examination.

But the affair is rather more than a lecture with slides; Sarraute's phrases are like a conjuror's empty hat from which she proceeds to pull chains of coloured handkerchiefs, singing canaries and jumping rabbits. She is a mistress of simile and metaphor, so that small flicks of mutual attraction or repulsion become enlarged into duels, manhunts, territorial conflicts, the closing of frontiers and the movements of armies. The phrases themselves may when interrogated betray the secret messages they carry, but they may also take the initiative and grow tyrannical: a couple seen at a café table, for instance, are exchanging messages of love with every innocuous word they utter, but the moment they recognise 'the birth of love' they enter a palace which swiftly turns into a well-guarded fortress where they must henceforth defend themselves against 'the death of love'. 'Words', Eliot said, 'slip, slide, perish'. In Sarraute's books they are just as likely to stalk, net and parcel up their unwary user.

But suppose the user is not unwary, suppose he is already self-conscious and made more so by finding himself in one of Sarraute's books? In the penultimate section of *The Use of Speech* the author organises a kind of party game in which her characters are divided into those who admit they can and those who admit they can't use the conversation-stopper 'Don't talk to me about that'. I will not reveal the outcome; suffice it to say that both teams turn the phrase and its tortuous implications into weapons against each other. Finally, of course, innocently collaborating over 'I don't understand', it is the writer and reader who confront one another. They circle a little and are almost on the point of losing the trust in each other which they have just built up, when the author makes a graceful excuse and breaks off – was it graceful, though, or barbed?

Yes, this is a primer – the least complex and, in Barbara Wright's translation, the most easily comprehensible introduction for new English readers to one of the greatest living writers. It's also a small masterpiece. The right phrase? □

SOCIETY
Michael Heffernan

Pink tents

Camp
MARK BOOTH *Quartet* £12.50

Two years before he died I spent a week in Dublin recording the voice of Michael MacLiammoir. In his 70s, his vision restricted to under a yard, he must have spent much of the morning creating the best image of preserved middle age which an uncertainly placed jet-black wig, pancake make-up and a dash of eye-shadow would allow. At midday I would take him to the studio, where he would wonder at the stupidity of a good-looking engineer (whom he could not see) doing such dull work; and, in the evening, to his own Gate Theatre, where he was playing a Goldsmith fop. His entrance, centre-stage, was the highpoint of the show. Guided by precisely positioned furniture, he made his way to the front, thrusting a child-pink hand into his muff. He missed, and had to make do with wildly stroking the thing as if it were the toy dog he had used as a prop for his legendary Iago. In the car, between studio and theatre, he told me how the people of Dublin hated him. Why shouldn't they? This was the man, probably born in England, who had made of himself an Irish institution by bringing corrupt European drama to holy Dublin; who – when young and handsome – had walked through Stephen's Green in a pink coat and black velour hat, and made his name in a generous re-creation of that dissolute dandy Oscar Wilde. But they loved him. He wasn't corrupt; he was camp.

MacLiammoir would probably have felt happy in the company of the *éminences cérises*, drag queens and children of the sun whose pictures fill the bulk of Mark Booth's book, so many of them (in the aesthetic sense) self-made men. In fact, it is the great risk of Camp to take under conscious control those parts of the self that should be left to nature, and mould self, body and mind, to the demands of the chosen role. Camp is a hubris of the city – where the refinement of style can lead to the extinction of passion. Not that it can do without passion, at least in the objects it chooses to admire: Rudolph Valentino, Judy Garland, Victor Mature play all their emotions to the hilt. But in the gallery of Camp, their great scenes become something else, drained of their obvious sexuality and invested with a new, colder attraction. The photograph is an ideal medium for the expression or enjoyment of this type of pure form. It isolates appearance and it freezes the moment. Like pornography and like the dream, the camp image is always of an aspect or a part, never rounded or whole. Nor does it develop; a thing of beauty is a boy forever.

Of course, it's all a matter of taste, and

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this book provides plenty of tit-bits. A pity they're all in black and white. Booth tells us that the origins of the camp use of 'camp' lie in the gait of the French military aristocrat, who liked to *se camper* before his fellows: at this cheeky price, surely we're entitled to a few pink tents? Even the text has the feel of being hit by a budget, as it flits from subject to subject in the attempt to land safely on its theme: what, my dear, *is* Camp?

For Booth, camp sensibility derives from camp behaviour, and his book concentrates on analysing camp people: 'To be camp is to present oneself as being committed to the marginal with a commitment greater than the marginal merits.' His efforts to make all his themes – style, sexuality, literature – conform to this definition prove confusing and are at their weakest when he turns 'camp people' into a kind of third sex, asexual in themselves but, like many women, forced by their 'marginality' into effeminate stereotypes. His descriptions and his stories make better reading than his theory. The Restoration fops, Regency dandies, Nineties decadents and Thirties spies are all here, as well as their French competitors, including the baron who made his young blond valet run for half an hour every morning in the Bois de Boulogne to produce the sweat with which the coachman polished his master's silk hat.

'One is drawn to camp when one realizes "sincerity" is not enough', writes Susan Sontag in her *Notes on Camp*, which Booth attacks for its fragmentary approach. Yet surely she is right to see Camp as a sensibility which we all recognise but find hard to define, partly because at its best it subverts the intentions of its object; if we cultivate a camp attachment to, say, *Gone with the Wind* we exploit, but destructively, its extravagant intensity. What we single out is the film's artifice; what we acknowledge and alleviate is a failure in seriousness. Camp is a sensibility of paradox and pathos; it proceeds in fits and starts. It has no linear history; anecdote or 'note' remain the best way to talk about it.

The most rewarding part of this book comes towards the end when Booth describes two parallel shifts in modern Camp – from the Victorian connoisseur to the pop idol, from refined good taste to the cult of the disposable: 'When a camp person walks through a modern city, he must feel that the configurations of that landscape are his own. The city is a veritable kaleidoscope of camp fads, lacking only the savage grace of self-mockery.' Piccadilly, with its concentrated crassness, he compares to a female impersonator. Among the daily fantasies we use to quell our fears, we shouldn't scorn the moment when the powerful woman on television, whose vulgarity and arrogance make the interviewer cower, triggers the memory of pantomime: 'Mummy, why is Prince Charming wearing nylons and high heels?' 'Well, didn't the dame say she was the only man in England?' From *gravitas* to *vanitas*, how steep and slippery the road. □

Michael Heffernan is a drama producer with the BBC.

BIOGRAPHY
Michael Hofmann

Showdown

Bertolt Brecht in America
JAMES K. LYON *Methuen* £5.95

In 1935, Brecht left Denmark for what turned out to be a pilot visit to the United States. His adaptation of Gorki's *Mother* was being put on by the left-wing New York Theater Union, and he wanted to be there to supervise the production. His reputation as 'the Einstein of the new stage form' had failed to precede him (indeed, it is doubtful if it ever really got there), so the American theatre people were entirely unprepared:

> He thundered out in a voice that would have humiliated the fight announcer at Madison Square Garden that 'This is shit!' I can still hear his Prussian drill master's call . . .

Eventually Brecht and his friend, the composer Hans Eisler, were thrown out of the rehearsals, the script and the acting methods were restored to their pre-Brechtian state, the show flopped, and the theatre went broke.

Six years later he was back in earnest, via Finland and the Soviet Union to Vladivos-

Photograph by Quintana Roo Dunne

SALVADOR
JOAN DIDION

In the summer of 1982 Joan Didion went to El Salvador. This terrifying book is her account of what she saw there.

'No one in El Salvador has interpreted the place better. "*Salvador*" shines with enlightening observation, and its language is lean and precise, in short what we have come to expect from Miss Didion.' ***The New York Times Book Review***

'El Salvador was a natural subject for Joan Didion and she has produced an account of her sojourn in that tortured country that evokes Garcia Marquez at his best.' ***Washington Post***

'We are in Joan Didion's debt for *Salvador*, her harrowing detailed and marvellously written first-hand account.' ***Robert Stone***

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tok, and from there on the last steamer to Los Angeles. He was at once deliriously unhappy: 'I have the feeling of being like Francis of Assisi in an aquarium, Lenin at the Prater (or the Oktoberfest), or a chrysanthemum in a coal-mine.' But he didn't wilt: the pungency of his attack on America in the poem 'Nachdenkend über die Hölle' can surely never have been bettered – the long, shimmering cars, the tasteless, scentless fruit, the houses built for happy people and hence always empty.

However, his work-ethic soon took over, and he settled down to making a living in Hollywood. The first story he came up with was sparked off by an article in *Life*, 'A Model Family in a Model Home', in which Ohio's 'most typical farm family are put on display for a week at the State Fair. In Brecht's version, though, there is a terrible quarrel on the eve of the opening which destroys both family and home.

This was of course completely unacceptable to bland, supportive, wartime Hollywood. So were Brecht's dictum, 'Sentiment is a laxative of the soul', and his theory of unemotional, anti-identification 'epic theatre'. He did, however, hit on the formula by which he might succeed in Hollywood: 'One must write as well as one can, and that must be just bad enough.' Brecht was only lucky on one occasion, though, with the story for a Fritz Lang film, *Hangmen Also Die*. Their collaboration was far from blissful and, curiously enough, the bleakly Brechtian title turns out to have been coined by a secretary in a competition.

Hollywood was the paradigm of Brecht's stay in America. He was unsuccessful in almost everything he turned his hand to (the exceptions were *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and the *Galileo* collaboration with Charles Laughton) and signally failed to graft himself on to any of the promising institutions or groups of people that beckoned to him, indigenous or exiled: from Broadway and Hollywood to the 'salon Marxists' of the Frankfurt school and the Council for a Democratic Germany. Even his own writing was affected: the attempted versification of the *Communist Manifesto*, or the play *The Visions of Simone Machard*, whose heroine was so un-credible that she grew progressively younger in Brecht's mind. Except for poems, he wrote nothing about America, and was largely uninterested in changing his image of the America of the mind that he wrote about in the Twenties – vicious, capitalist, gangsterish.

To the people he met there he appeared awkward, arrogant, manipulative, fractious. In business matters he was characterised by carelessness, or sharp practice – time and again offering a production, exclusive rights, translations, parts in plays, to three or four separate people at once. As an exile, his policy was survivalism and cunning rather than martyrdom, but he still failed to have his way with America. While he was not vainly pursuing his chosen goals, he was as busy not replying to letters and telegrams, refusing permission to publish his books and perform his plays, and generally being intractable. He failed, really, to give satisfaction to anyone, even the FBI: 'We have two and one-half Communist representatives on the Council. The half is Bert Brecht.'

James K. Lyon tries to argue that this interlude was significant in Brecht's life – and also to America – but from the first visit in 1935 to the final showdown in front of the House Committee of Un-American Activities (unforgettably described by Eric Bentley as a zoologist being cross-examined by apes) and the grant of 1,000 dollars from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters ('in his name we also thank other European authors who have come here as exiles and remained to contribute to our culture') that had to be thrown after him, because he had already left, the whole story has the inevitability of good farce. Lyon tells it well, and in loving detail (how Brecht put four tables in the first decent-sized workroom he had in the States), but he shows a preference for restatement to analysis, he fails to see alternatives (he says things like, 'Today we know he was right', or 'Like many creative geniuses, Brecht . . .'). Sometimes there is too much of La Jolla in his formulations: he talks about Brecht (of all people!) 'letting his hair down'. In the end, *Brecht in America* is a double escape story: they were lucky to get away from each other. □

John Levett

Closedown

You watch me work at speech
Slowed down and amplified
Yet still beyond your reach,
My static slip and slide

That interval between
Two stations on the dial.
You strain at what I mean,
Not knowing makes you smile

And mistiming your guess
You nod while I still play;
My words are meaningless,
My gesturing hearsay.

It isn't only age
That leads you into this
Accumulating rage
And stray hypothesis

But partly new technique
Adopted to control
That ever present freak
The other person's will,

Responding with 'Goodbye'
As I stand up to go
And close down for the day
Love's broken radio.

ARCHITECTURE
Jules Lubbock

High Deco

TV-AM'S CAMDEN Lock studio – particularly the facade and foyer – ought to be protected against any talk of demolition with Grade 1 Listed Building status. Not because it is a masterpiece, but because it is the first, and may well remain the only, example of High-Dec-Post-Imperial-Baroque. Visually the most extravagant edifice in Britain since the Odeon cinemas and the Hoover factory of the Thirties, not the least of its ironies is that TV-am should have produced more entertaining architecture than programmes.

For the financial backers the building has come to seem number one scapegoat, the embodiment of Jay's profligacy (£10m of their cash down the drain on architectural high jinks). The press, for whom all architecture is fair game, have accepted this. For once they're wrong. The High Deco frills cost only two per cent of the total (fixed contract price) – £100,000. At £40 per square foot, costs were reasonable. And the clients have a highly efficient solution to their extremely complex requirements for offices, newsrooms, soundproofed studios and technical facilities, as well as a pleasant place to work. They also have a valuable asset. The one real extravagance, Jay's studio-house on the canal (now renamed the caretaker's cottage), has passed largely without comment. If the building has any bearing on the company's finances, it is not the cost of decoration that should be questioned, but why they chose to spend £5½m on a building and £4½m on equipment at all.

The answer is that they didn't. The plan was to rent Ewart's TV facility house in Wandsworth, and to build premises there for £5m. This fell through because of disagreements with Ewart over a proposal which would have cost an extra £2m. Hence the decision by TV-am's board and backers to provide all their facilities in-house in a converted garage at Camden Lock. The building would be a good property speculation, whose expenses would be defrayed by letting 98,000 square feet of offices, capitalised at £3½m, and by not having to pay Ewart. Breakfast TV had been a success in Australia as well as in the US. So it was a combination of cock-up, over-confidence and greed which fired their rage to build a showpiece. Financially, it was and is a good deal, which was used as a symbol of Jay's extravagance only in hindsight.

Nonetheless the building's public face is at odds with Jay's evangelical zeal for responsible tele-journalism. This reflects the contradiction inherent in TV-am from the start. The garish facade seems to have been commissioned to convince the likes of Saat-

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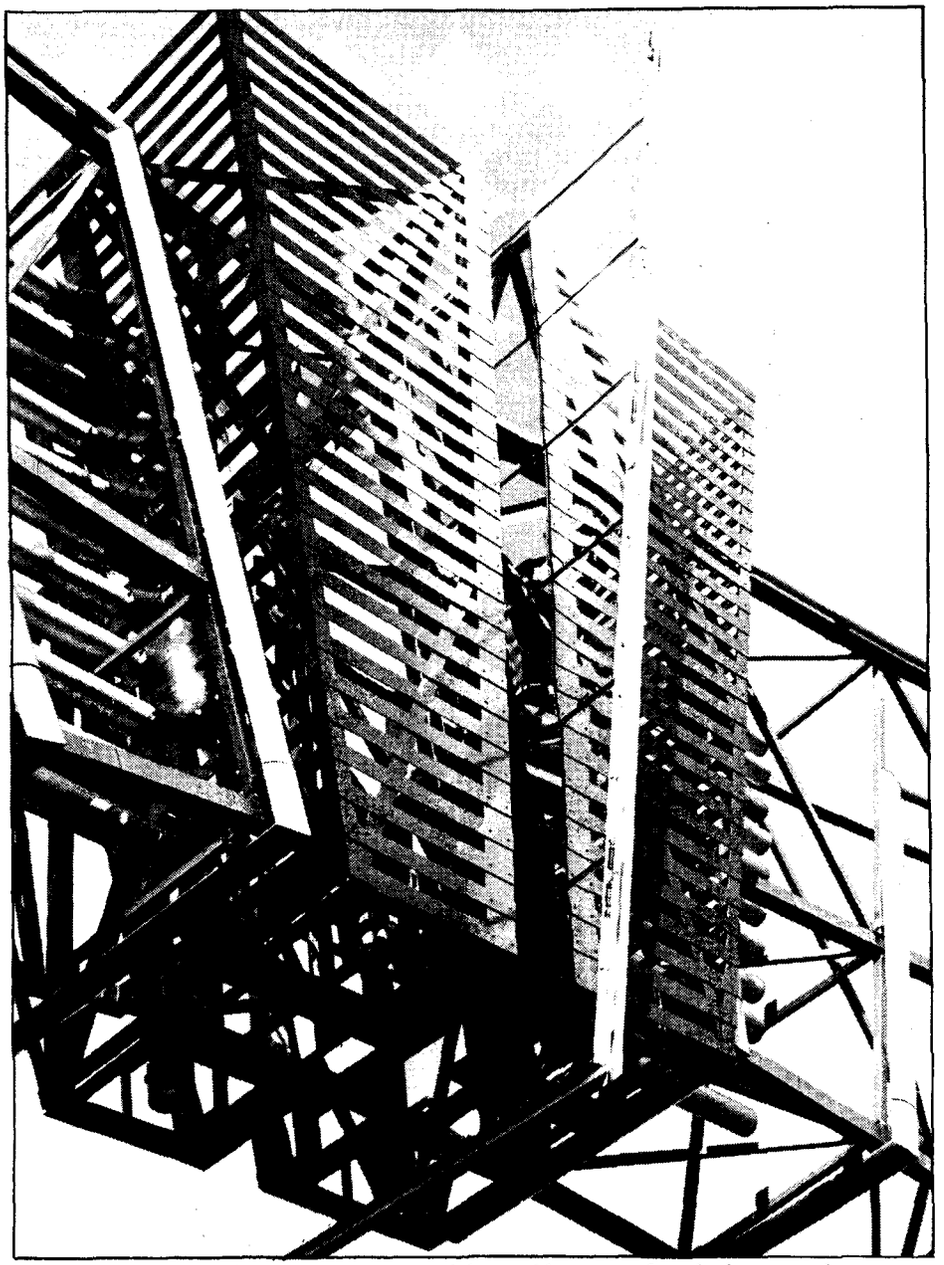

The entrance: steel girders and an exaggerated dropped keystone of steel, chrome and neon

chi that the Wykehamist ex-Ambassador was a real TV mogul. No real Mogul would have needed it.

Jay's architect, Terry Farrell, Britain's leading Post-Modernist (the fashionable comico-classical style), possessed the right combination of practical intelligence, speed, cost-awareness and a real flair for the spectacular. Here his imagination went into orbit. The former garage was on two floors with a long open space down the middle. This he turned into a two-storey internal courtyard, linked to the street facade by a continuous rusticated basement. He hyped it up with a confection of Baroque garden follies. The street entrance is spanned with an imitation of Vanburgh's Grand Bridge at Blenheim in brightly painted steel girders and an exaggerated dropped keystone of steel, chrome and neon. The courtyard contains a Memphis-style Japanese temple, the hospitality lounge, in the East; a Mesopotamian ziggurat for a staircase and palm-trees in the Middle East; a Greek temple in the West, and potted cacti in the Wild West. Harmless frolics except that they are all that visitors and investors ever see of the building.

Neither do they appear on screen. And Farrell had no hand in the fusty set – a brick-lined living room, Ideal Home vintage 1954. This was a real architectural folly. Deakin's patronising justification is that a 'lower middle-class audience' required a 'classless' set. When did he last visit the Ideal Home Exhibition? Hasn't he had a chat with Britain's Mr Furniture, Terence Conran? In the past fortnight someone has had the *nous* to do so, and one corner of the studio begins to look just like Habitat.

The building's objective merits are beside the point. In Post-Modernism we are witnessing the return of architectural imagery and necromancy without any understanding of their dangers. Jay's folly was to have been ignorant of an ancient principle, formulated by that wise politician Cosimo de Medici, that apparent extravagance matters more than real cost. The facade took on a life of its own and has devoured its creators. As for the shareholders however, should TV-am fold, they still possesss a £12m asset, which cost them only £6m. □

ART
John Spurling

Dusty answer

A.I.A. 1933-1953
Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, until 22 May, then Bradford, Nottingham, Hull, Edinburgh, London.

The Artists' International Association was founded 50 years ago and fell apart 20 years later when the clause in its constitution pledging members 'to take part in political activity, to organise or collaborate in any meeting or demonstration in sympathy with the aims of the Association' was watered down into a vaguer commitment 'to work for the co-operation of artists for intellectual freedom, economic security and the promotion of peace and international understanding'. The large touring exhibition and accompanying book (Museum of Modern Art, £3.95) by Lynda Morris and Robert Radford, which celebrates the Association's anniversary and documents its history, pose the perennial question about the political and social role of artists and returns a dusty answer. Politically the AIA achieved nothing, artistically it was responsible for some notable exhibitions but produced only mediocre artists.

The original aim of the founder-members – Cliff Rowe, Misha Black and James Boswell – was to mobilise 'the international unity of artists against Imperialist War on the Soviet Union, Fascism and Colonial oppression'. This evolved fairly soon into a mildly pro-Soviet and a fiercely anti-Fascist stance, an attempt to promote peace and prevent war and, more practically, a protest against avant-gardism in the arts and a desire to bring art back into contact with ordinary people. The naive fruitlessness of the whole endeavour was well expressed in the AIA's own slogan: 'conservative in art and radical in politics'. Here was a bunch of young cowboys (staunchly supported from the pages of the *Spectator* by young Anthony Blunt) setting out to say boo to Hitler on the one hand and to Picasso, Mondrian, Moore, Miró *et al* on the other. As a matter of fact, they might easily have enrolled their first enemy against their second and, as the decade wore on and Fascism flourished, they were supported and given brief importance by many of the outstanding artists they were basically opposed to.

But the impossibility of being both a political activist and an artistic reactionary was tellingly exposed by one of the AIA's own members, Felicia Browne, who was killed in the Spanish Civil War. Shortly before her death she wrote:

> You say I am escaping and evading things by not painting or making sculpture. If there is no painting or sculpture to be made I cannot make it. I can only make out of what is valid

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and urgent to me. If painting and sculpture were more valid and urgent to me than the earthquake which is happening in the revolution, or if these two were reconciled so that the demands of one didn't conflict (in time, even, or concentration) with the demands of the other, I should paint or make sculpture.

If you were a satirist, like 'the three Jameses' of *The Left Review* (Fitton, Boswell and Holland), you could fight Fascism, Capitalism and Imperialism in your fashion; if you were a photographer, like Humphrey Spender or Edith Tudor-Hart, you could reveal the social conditions in Stepney or behind the Jarrow Hunger March; but if, like most of the AIA members, you were a straight painter or sculptor with no very urgent personal vision you settled (unless you were Felicia Browne) for statements, banners and congresses on the one hand and descriptive pieces in the worn-out shorthand conventions of academic realism on the other.

This is not to say that this exhibition is a waste of time. However parochial and unexciting the pictures on the walls may be, indeed just because they are, they convey a strong sense of their period. This is especially true of the work done during the war, when AIA members, holding their own exhibitions and acting as unofficial war artists, often recorded the more humdrum and trivial aspects of life which escaped the official war artists. The 'Everyman Prints' series, launched in 1940 with 52 titles at 1/6d coloured and 1/- plain, was an admirable attempt to make original works of art available to every home through shops as well as exhibitions. The initial sale of 3,000 prints in the first three weeks was promising, but interest dwindled after that. Did the 'ordinary people' for whom they were intended actually buy them or did they find them too dull? They are lent a certain flavour now by the unfamiliarity of their subject-matter – blackouts, barrage balloons, scenes of evacuation – but nobody's world is actually as dreary and generalised as this sort of pedestrian realism suggests. It is a kind of snobbishness and laziness in the artist which pretends to find 'art for the people' in scenes where individuals are reduced to types and their activities to propaganda for the 'ordinary'.

Yet there are examples in this exhibition of the opposite, of 'ordinary' life made real, specific, unique. Derek Chittock's large painting 'The Arrest of the Dockers' is one such, a powerfully dramatic scene of the police breaking in on seven men round a table in a bare, narrow room; every face, including those of the detectives, is sharply individualised and the orange tablecloth, flaming among the prevailing greys and browns, objectifies and releases the angry violence latent in every gesture and expression. Clive Branson's 'Portrait of a Worker', Margaret Fitton's 'The Machinist', Percy Horton's 'Woman Ironing' are other less ambitious examples of artistic as well as ideological respect for the subject.

For the Euston Road School, of course, this kind of truth to the subject, which implied a closer attention to the form it was expressed in than most realists would allow for, was more important than any political or sociological convictions. The organisers of the exhibition have secured two fine Coldstreams, both done in 1938 – his portraits of St Pancras Station and of the young Stephen Spender – and in the company of the AIA his punctiliously etiolated notation looks unusually strong. In the end, though, there is only one painting in the show which successfully fuses art and politics into a masterpiece of political art – and that by a painter whose style remained anathema to the AIA theorists even though his and his fellow Surrealists' adherence was invited for the fight against Franco in 1936. Edward Burra's 'War in the Sun' is a Surrealist version of the Spanish Civil War and, although it did no more to stop Franco than Felicia Browne did, it demonstrates the only way that an artist as such can take part in politics: not by description, but by description transmuted through the imagination into a resounding and disturbing image of brutality and barbarism. Alas, no clauses in the AIA's constitution could legislate for that. □

FILMS
John Coleman

Poles apart

Sophie's Choice (15)
Empire
The Young Ladies of Wilko (PG)
Camden Plaza
The Clinic (18)
Classic Haymarket; ABCs, Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Roads
G'Olé! (PG)
Classic, Oxford Street

It is one hell of a performance, Meryl Streep's tormented, fluttering, vivacious, haggard, blooming, weak-strong, young-old Polish survivor of Auschwitz, nervously open to sudden gaiety or as abrupt abuse, resolved to seize the day in a Brooklyn boarding-house in 1947 along with the wild, handsome Jew who nursed her back to health, but haunted at heart, something more and less than a chameleon: a victim, after all. Alan J. Pakula's **Sophie's Choice**, co-produced, directed and scripted alone by Pakula from William Styron's 1979 bestseller, is all about this Sophie, in the event, and in two senses, as Styron's long novel – which I have read of but not read – probably wasn't: when she is off screen, there is mostly a sense of absence, a space to be filled with a little divertissement such as the comical attempts of callow and randy Stingo, the Styron stand-in who narrated and meditated the book, to make love to a bosomy girl who keeps saying 'fuck' but won't. Streep's Sophie holds the show together. It is on a spectral close-up of her face that the screen bleaches out and the film ends.

Inevitably so, one suspects, since young Stingo (fresh-faced and concerned Peter MacNicol) has a greatly reduced presence in the movie as the would-be writer from Virginia, a virgin of 22 quite fascinated by the kiss-and-quarrel antics of the exotic couple in the apartment above him, Sophie with her broken English – outrageously, she invites him up for a 'night hat', then admires his suit: 'You're wearing your cocksucker' – and thin-moustached Nathan (Kevin Kline, now and then shatteringly like the youthful Olivier) with his broken mind. From other works one is familiar with Styron's style, mandarin-ornamental at worst, and it shrivels the ears with embarrassment emerging in Stingo's linking voice-overs, never there to be spoken aloud: on the page, it would have been accommodated and accommodating – pensive cement. MacNicol and Kline act their guts out, Kline notably relishing Nathan's wicked mocking of Stingo's Southern accent and assumed background, charming extraordinarily when the weather in his head is propitious. There is great merriment in the trio's picnics and fairground visits and nocturnal street roistering. Pakula and his photographer Nestor Almendros suck maximum sweetness from such impromptu occasions as an early morning appearance through sleeping Stingo's window by mischievous Nathan and Sophie.

And there is a running line of sorts, the business of lies followed by awful disclosures. For Sophie's Auschwitz flashbacks, Streep has a heart-rending, crop-headed gauntness that allows a weird beauty, so that the commandant Rudolf Hoess's angry attraction to her is all too credible. Pakula skirts sensationalism in this difficult stuff. When, very late on, Sophie – having earlier admitted her camp-killed professor father was anti-Semitic – decides to tell Stingo what she has told no one before, that she was forced to choose which of her kids should survive we move from a big close shot of her speaking to the enactment of the horror, the relished evil on the German officer's face, her mouth stretched gaping on a silent howl: it is sickeningly powerful. And Stingo has had to endure another revelation, summoned by Nathan's brother: that Nathan the brilliant molecular biologist can barely hold down a job as librarian, boosts himself with benzedrine and cocaine, is a paranoid schizophrenic.

All this weight of finally revealed truth might be read – and read is the word – as somehow valuable in the development of wide-eyed Stingo, his necessary glimpse of the pit before a natural optimism can reassert itself. In the movie it registers too strongly for that, jarring somehow uncouthly with the glamorous dressing-up and waltzing around: the movie itself becomes schizoid in effect. Perhaps the most perfectly achieved sequence, where pity and life-giving humour are beautifully balanced, comes in how Nathan and Sophie first met. After an English class, six months into her experience of America, the wan girl-woman mistakes the name of an author and crosses a vast library floor to ask at the desk for 'Emil Dickens'. The librarian is jeeringly dismissive as she persists, reminiscent of one

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of the camp officials perhaps. And she sinks in a faint to the floor, to revive as Nathan's gentle face looms over her. Later, a poem of Emily Dickinson's about a bed is to recur, tenderly.

Just how well Meryl Streep has caught that peculiarly reflex flirtatiousness of many Polish women, the eye-play and hands restlessly moving to rearrange hair, the equivocal amusement when they giggle together among men, as if for display, a battery of signals that is distinctively feminine and there to announce femininity (availability is something else again); how subtly she goes through this behaviour between archness and blinding charm, then, may be verified from Andrzej Wajda's **The Young Ladies of Wilko,** a romantic period piece set in the late Twenties or early Thirties and made in 1979, after *Man of Marble* and *Rough Treatment* and before his masterpiece *Man of Iron*. A gloomy fellow, Victor (Daniel Olbrychski), is advised by his doctor to take a holiday and decides to stay with his aunt and uncle in the country. Nearby is the luxuriant estate of a family of five sisters and their various dependents. After a summer spent there 15 years earlier, before his now lingering memories of war service on the Russian front, he resolves to pay a visit, which becomes the first of several.

'Chekhovian' has been bandied about as fitting this little drama very cosily, presumably drawing on such vague associations as a number of sisters (one or more of whom might well be in mourning for a wasted life), an aimless man with a poetic cast to him, a good deal of autumnal-looking summer weather and water and reposeful scenery, and the prevalent sense that nothing much is going on rather slowly. The youngest sister, Tunia (delightful Christine Pascal), falls for Victor, who sees in her the sister now dead he keeps asking after into a silence. When he leaves, Tunia may have been contemplating suicide. It does Chekhov a mindless disservice to associate his complex genius with this languid affair, drawn from a 1932 novel by Jaroslav Iwaszkiewicz, an old man we glimpse at the close in the train bearing Victor away. The sisters are nicely differentiated, even if all but one seem more or less vaguely to fancy their angst-ridden visitor. And there is always that 'period' appeal, with the chilliest Wilko young lady trailing a volume of Ethel M. Dell wherever she goes. Some humour, some pathos, some irony even: but nothing feels *attached* to anything of substance.

David Stevens' Australian **The Clinic** is an unexpectedly appealing feature debut, given that the title indicates where an assortment of customers bring their VD worries during a busy day. At times it sinks to a *Carry on Clapping* level; one poor devil kills himself; and an overly relaxed woman counsellor seems to suggest that catching a dose is a sure indication of honest warm-heartedness: she damn near recommends it. Otherwise, it's sane, direct and quite funny. **G'Olé**, the 'official film of the 1982 World Cup', irritatingly scrappy on the football – *ludus interruptus, we fans call it* – benefits hugely from an acid commentary on professional fouls. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Point blank

THE PARAS (BBC-1) was such a hit that they're commissioning a whole new series. This time the rigorous selection process (only 16 out of 41 made it through the last series, remember) is to be completed on the battlefield itself – which battlefield we won't know till it happens – then in hospital, civvy street, the homes of the bereaved, or wherever the cameras have to go to record the lives (or deaths) of the remaining 'paras', if any. A spin-off series is planned round the lives of the physiotherapists and plastic surgeons involved in the aftermath. In last week's episode we got an idea of what the fighting will look like when England is the battlefield. Trainers holding trainee paras from behind, exactly as directors hold their cameramen, bobbed and darted among the willows and brooks of an English water-meadow for 'CQB' – Close Quarter Battle. 'Momentum!' yelled the director through a megaphone, 'You've got to maintain momentum, otherwise the whole thing will grind to a halt!' It was during this episode that our boys heard about the location work going on in the Falklands. They had one day to learn 'the rudiments of house-clearance'.

It seems years ago that the jolly 'paras' first burst into our living rooms singing 'We are the paras, we are the paras . . . Read about us in the new *Radio Times*!' 'It's like house-training a dog', explained the kindly RSM. 'Get your hand down that bowl, Rigby. You're not trying, man. Open your legs! Death, Life, Death, Life, Death, Life . . . Clark, you're too sensitive about your person. You've been back-squadded.' Remember the General who asked the lad on passing-out day why he wanted to be a 'para'? 'I want to jump out of the sky sir!' panicked the squaddie. 'You mean you're interested in parachute training?', suggested the General. 'Yessir, I want to jump out of the sky!' So. It was back to crap-hats for 480 platoon. 'There's only two things drop out of the sky', cracked someone's guardsman brother on passing-out day, 'Birdshit and paras.'

QED's **Simon's War** (BBC-1) was a brave film about a very brave Welsh Guardsman, Simon Weston, who received 46% burns aboard the ill-fated Sir Galahad. 'Turmoil and carnage' was the way he described it. 'There were three blokes in front of me running around in flames.' The cameras were already knitting when he was brought ashore and his 'Fuck off!' is preserved at the start of this film of the longer battle he is now fighting for his own skin. The first trial was the removal of the stretcher from his back. We were presented point blank with his screams. 'As long as you can sort my hands and eyes out', he said later, 'I don't care what you do.' From what one could tell, a palm graft, let alone an eyelid graft, is a despairingly makeshift affair, little more than permanent bandaging, prone to distortion. 'I think I should be quite guarded about the outcome of the hands', the surgeon told Simon's parents. His mother is a nurse: impossible to imagine her suffering, or her thoughts at the appalling irony of her vocation. 'As soon as my fingernails are long enough', said the gallant Simon, contemplating a claw with what looked like cigarette butts stuck to it, 'I'm going to pick my nose.' His daily dressings alone took 3½ hours.

Eventually, he comes home to Nelson. The small Welsh town tenderly welcomes him. A heartbreaking elation sets in. Is Simon being brave again when he tells his granny he'll be playing rugby by the end of the season? We see him at the physio: 'Frown. Look happy.' His face is under pressure to do these things. A newspaper headline, 'Can doctors give this man his face back?' provokes a rare protest: 'I'm no Ryan O'Neal, but I've had a face all along.' Two months later the situation is 'more up and down . . . things have started to go wrong.' His girlfriend has left him – 'It was a sacrifice for both of us' – and, perhaps worse, 'They say there is very little chance of my being able to do my job.' He was perhaps luckier than those with no back-up of small-town support to count on. 'The worst thing was losing my mates. They're gone forever. I'm alive. I'm still doing crazy things.' My God, this guy was too good for television. He was far too good for me. Such bravery was a kind of sacrifice all of its own. First on behalf of his parents, then to a widening circle, including the government, us, and especially the parents of soldiers who didn't come home.

One of these was Lt David Tinker, who died on board HMS *Glamorgan*. His story was told on **First Tuesday** (Thames). Unlike Simon, David ended up questioning the war he was sacrificed to. A dreamy, romantic young man, he grew up suddenly and was destroyed. 'We're off to the Falklands to do a bit of wog-bashing', he wrote at the outset. 'So like Maggie to stick up for a colony with a show of force.' Before long the tone of his letters had changed. 'Reality is dawning fast. Honour would be served if one of our subs could sink one of their ships' – then, 'I do hope Maggie will have had enough of her war soon and we can all go home and be ban-the-bomb enthusiasts.' There is bitterness: 'Does Mrs Thatcher imagine she is Churchill defying Hitler?' Finally, his father read out the letter containing what has become the unofficial epitaph on the war, 'It is the equivalent of handing over £1m to every Falklander and killing all their young men.' This was another kind of bravery: to face the pointlessness. As echoes and repeats of the conflict keep on coming tiresomely home to roost in the Thatcher barn, their impact will change for the British public in exactly the way that David Tinker's mind was changed on board the *Glamorgan*. Better repeats than a new series. □

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THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

Alpha beta

Blood Brothers
WILLY RUSSELL *Lyric*
Not About Heroes
STEPHEN MACDONALD *Kings Head*
Run For Your Wife
RAY COONEY *Shaftesbury*

Most twins I've met have been as ordinary as, well, Tweedledum and Tweedledee; yet the idea persists that there's some spooky, symbiotic connection between the two of them, even when they're physically separated by enormous crowds or their equivalents. It is a belief that Willy Russell shares, and does not share at all. At one level his **Blood Brothers** is a dour treatise, written from a determinist stance, about the inequality of opportunity in modern Britain, and especially in modern Liverpool. Twin alpha is removed from twin beta at birth, as it were by an experimental psychologist, but actually by a mother so poor she has agreed to give one to her childless employer. For Edward, this means public school, Oxbridge, a glistening career; for Micky, the route is a dump school, unemployment, crime, prison and mental ruin; and the inference is that if the luck of the draw had gone the other way, their histories would have been precisely opposite. That, indeed, is what Micky dimly senses at the end, when he learns his mother's secret, yells, 'Why didn't you give *me* away?' and shoots dead the brother who, among other things, has nabbed his wife from him.

The narrator in the cheap blue suit invites us to see this glum denouement in terms of class, not superstition; and no doubt he is right. But that doesn't quite explain the undoubted pull of *Blood Brothers*. Nor does the gutsy music, nor the comic incident, nor the lively social detail, such as children's games swaggeringly burlesqued by adults; nor even the Liverpudlian energy of a cast that includes Barbara Dickson, George Costigan, Peter Christian and several others worth remembering. No, the musical touches (or touched in me) some other nerve altogether; and it is, I think, the one that responds to myth, fairy-tale, legend, the one that pricks up at such stories as that of Balin and Balan, twin brothers who supposedly slaughtered each other in the Arthurian twilight.

Thoroughgoing rationalist though Russell purports to be, he is not above exploiting this gullibility, innocence, call it what you will. Instead of showing the brothers living their separate and different lives, he brings them inexplicably together and allows an even more inexplicable friendship to develop between them. As children, as teenagers, as young adults the two are one, in defiance of social probability; and it is in this eerie yet strangely plausible bond, more than anything else, that the true fascination of the evening is to be found. What Russell has done, in short, is concoct a folk-ballad, packed with the highly-coloured oddities of the genre yet rooted in a recognisable reality, and then use it to make a socialist point. It kept me riveted throughout.

Not About Heroes involves a less destructive friendship: between Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, the one fastidious and aloof, the other gawky and enthusiastic, both entirely cynical about the war that has put them in a hospital for the shell-shocked and/or politically inconvenient. It jarred once only: when a conversation about the horrors of Passchendaele insidiously evolves into an earnest discussion about Owen's progress up the slopes of Parnassus. The author – who plays the urbane Englishman to James Telfer's excitable Welshman – doesn't seem to realise how devastatingly he is writing about the parasitism of the artist, his capacity for wresting fame from others' pain. But Mr MacDonald's sensitivity reasserts itself, and the piece becomes what it has hitherto been: careful, subtle and as touching as the period's reticence will permit; not an evening to sear heart or mind, but consistently absorbing.

Farce of concealment, the kind that thrives on character A desperately preventing character B finding out fact X, has been one of the sexual revolution's less noticed victims. It doesn't matter if the husband spots the lover under the bed as much as it did in the days of Feydeau or even Travers. But Ray Cooney offers a solution in **Run For Your Wife**: bigamy, which could land the practitioner in jug, yet somehow doesn't alienate us from him as much as most crimes. So there's genuine tension as Richard Briers, incompetently aided by Bernard Cribbins, tries to keep the secret of his two wives from both them and the police; and from tension comes mirth, perhaps even enough to justify the Shaftesbury's arrogant re-christening, 'Theatre of Laughter'. A pity, though, that the situation, spiralling inventively for a time, should end in muddle, silliness and cheap cracks at the expense of the gay community. There's a class of theatregoer which will fall to the floor in terminal hysteria when, as happens here, a camp gentleman minces across the stage squealing, 'Ooh, bossyboots!'; and Cooney unashamedly panders to it. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2766 **Set by Pat Blackford**

It's time for a modern book of etiquette. Extracts, please, from one of the following sections: 'In the Dole Queue'; 'At the Sauna'; 'In the Football Stadium'; 'At the Supermarket'; 'Watching the Television'. Up to 150 words, by 29 April.

No 2763 **Set by Snubbin**

Unlikely episodes of *This Is Your Life*.

Report **by Jemima Squiffy**

The subjects of these *TIYL* episodes were meant to find the whole thing embarrassing or distasteful. Philip Larkin obviously meets this requirement; I'm not so sure about Amis *père*, but I exercised my judge's discretion. Oh, and before we get yet another lawyer's letter, I should say that the Pinter programme is entirely fictitious. Well, *almost* entirely. Eight green rectangles apiece.

Andrews: So, Kingsley, 1948 saw the arrival of a little stranger – flown in at great expense from Los Angeles, where he is writing his new novel *Tales My Father Taught Me* . . . your son Martin.
M. Amis: (sniggering) Hi, oldster. *(K. Amis shudders).*
Andrews: A chip off the old block . . . but it was in 1954 that you made the big break with a novel called *(consults notes) Lucky Jim*. 'An angry young man', they said; and here, brought out of retirement, are some of the academics you satirised. You thought you'd never see them again but . . .
(Enter half a dozen clapped-out old profs who, catching sight of Amis, refuse to shake hands and sit as far away from him as possible.)
Amis: It was then that I anticipated the decline of our educational system.
Andrews: Sure. 'More means worse', you said. And here . . . *(Enter student rabble bearing placards)* are some people who would want to disagree . . .
Amis: Crikey!
(Students begin to pelt Amis with rotten fruit. Profs applaud. Chaos etc.) DAVID TAYLOR

(Offstage voice): . . . and I said, you wouldn't dare, Hal, and he said, he said, I've got you over a barrel, en't I?
Eamonn: Yes, you blackmailed him in a Bognor boarding-house 27 years ago, and you haven't seen him since, come in Stanley Webber!
Stanley: (enters) Ggggg . . . ggggottt some nnnew *(pause)* glasses . . .
Pinter (pause) Uh . . .
Laughter. Applause.
Eamonn: And yes, also come in *(which they do)* Mac Davies, or Bernard Jenkins as you knew him when you picked up his bag in the Goldhawk Road; Rose Hudd, whose flat you occupied after she had eye trouble; come in, Ruth X, the girl you kept on the game in Greek St. while you were making your way, and here's another familiar voice –
(Offstage voice): So I told him, any time you want references, I've got a complete set down at Sidcup.
Eamonn: Yes, you haven't seen him for over 35 years, so come in . . . WILL BELLENGER

. . . and we've not only identified the very train on which you travelled that Whitsun – a journey that was to bear you into the hearts of poetry-lovers everywhere – but we've traced all nine newly-wedded couples that boarded it *en route*. Three of those couples are now divorced; two, though still together, no longer wish to recall that day; one couple died in a suicide pact; another in a multiple pile-up on the M4; while one wife now lives in strict retirement in North London after a small disagreement with her late husband over a meat cleaver. So now, Philip Larkin – Bard, Bookman and Jazz-Buff – meet our sole representative of that propitious day, a dole-queuer whose wife left him only last week.
Fanfare. He enters. (Seizing Eamonn's script) I can do that. *(To Larkin)* Yer a librarian arnyer? Gi'e us a job then, gi'e us a job. *(Larkin makes helpless gesture. He is head-butted. Blood everywhere . . .)*
MARTIN FAGG

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FIRST PERSON

Kathy O'Shaughnessy

A faint drawl

IN DAVID HARE's play *A Map of the World*, an African describes the British press and its habit of distorting the Third World. This outspoken character also adds, 'Boring is the word the English use to distance themselves from anything they don't like.' The packed audience at the Lyttelton solemnly absorbed this remark and I was delighted to hear it. The African was getting at the British press not only for its impressive powers of misrepresentation but also for its euphemising or complacent powers of self-deception. Rather than be inconvenienced, bothered by something, call it boring, as if it (the Third World, for example) merely fails to entertain.

'Boring' crops up all over the place – the safest, if not the smuggest criticism that can be spoken, or drawled. It's a staple ingredient of a certain kind of journalese (e.g. the columns of the less than illustrious Mr Waugh). But why bother to say anything about something so, er, boring as this abuse or over-usage? Well, Hare has put it rather nicely. 'Boring' is the classic example of a particularly dishonest means of dismissal – evasion, usually a right-of-centre means, and usually with regard to matters political. As a typical sleight of hand, the it's-so-boring syndrome is, to confuse metaphors shamefully, merely the linguistic tip of a political iceberg. One can sum this up with a dialogue that might be typical.

Aubrey and Stephen are accidentally forced into proximity because they're sharing a college room. Aubrey, let us say, has been listening to Stephen's earnest rant about social deprivation for the last thirty minutes, and at this point he turns to his friend Cholmondely-Vere (a.k.a. Hoggy Henry): 'God, Hoggy' – yawn – 'Stephen's *so* boring'. The facility is remarkable. No energy, intelligence, wit required – and then, a faint drawl, only just audible: '. . . *so* bori . . .' and lo, the Stephens of this world are instantly vanquished.

This sort of dismissal is popular and not really criticised; it is unworthily successful and astonishingly difficult to reply to properly without looking like Stephen (a bit hopeless, a bit dull, a bit intense). As a fairly crushing denunciation it works for several reasons. 'It's so boring' compliments the speaker as much as it insults the opponent. Henreh for instance, who says that feminists are just thuch a dwag, thereby presents himself as a jolly witty and interesting person, so interesting that he has a particularly low threshold of boredom. (He is easily bored; *ergo*, he is not boring.) Moreover, 'boring' is such a brilliantly non-specific criticism that you can't argue against it. Whatever the actual issue in question, it has been waived, and different priorities have been set forth. Namely, are you being serious (a drag) or are you amusing? A political issue is judged in terms of entertainment value; not for its content but effectively for its style.

Oddly enough, aesthetics, the cult of style, now seems to go hand in hand with philistinism, anti-intellectualism. I say 'odd' because traditionally aesthetics is associated with art, which in turn is associated with intellectualism and so forth. But the fact is, there is much well-written right-wing journalism where certain consistent features appear. The stress on style produces that kind of well turned-out article where the sentences signal a confidence that becomes almost a literary/parochial swagger. The confidence manifests itself in the ability to flaunt whimsically personal irrelevancies, ostentatious trivia; to say that (against all odds!) this stuff is worth a public airing. It's rather like social confidence, but on the page. Coupled with this is a distrust of anything 'intellectual' – i.e., anything that points to a complex variety of meanings rather than a set of simplistic assumptions. Aesthetic philistinism! It's an interesting if rather hybrid concept; and it's certainly not an apolitical phenomenon.

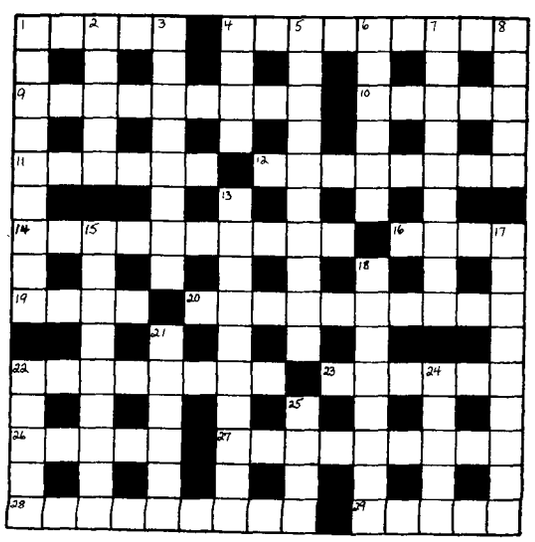
The *Eye*'s 'Naked Cow' (their periodic answer to the *Guardian*'s 'Naked Ape') is a case in point. As a feature 'Naked Cow' displays a happily impartial, broad-minded attitude ('All loony feminist nonsense gratefully received'). The *Eye* turns feminism into ludicrous comedy which, without wishing to bore on (God forbid!) is, of course, on one level a political act in itself.

In fact this wonderful piece of transmogrification extends to most things intellectual, not merely feminist theory. 'Pseud's Corner' has a very useful role to play but, alas, the *Eye* dredges up pieces of writing that frequently aren't at all pretentious. Right-wing anti-intellectualism is entertaining, undeniably witty, and complicated, but three things are certain: (i) the British are particularly good at it; (ii) it's a political stance that masquerades as an aesthetic stance; (iii) to yawn or to laugh is a dreadfully effective means of ridiculing and defusing actual political issues.

But, *quel dommage*, the left-wing press doesn't retaliate in kind. Humour is often as serious as it's funny; it can obviously serve political ends to good effect, and can itself preclude the transformation of political issues into merely humorous ones. What a pity . . . □

Weekend Crossword 1397

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1397, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 26 April.



ACROSS

1. Artist makes swan turn into snake. (5)
4. Inspectors cut back the work-force. (9)
9. Wrongly sat on the throne in a region far from the capital. (9)
10. Belief in the opposite of a claim to divinity. (5)
11. Those who succeed follow their leader for other people's. (6)
12. The southern town would be big if it were not mixed up with the north. (8)
14. Exodus in rhyme (5,5)
16. Another instalment for Thomas. (4)
19. Where the competent are back. (4)
20. A very successful team but they only have a hundred supporters. (10)
22. Interrupts a game, putting grooves back in. (8)
23. Mushroom which makes an officer almost wealthy. (6)
26. Stretch of water in area charted by the Navy. (5)
27. Tries a lot in Greek translation. (9)
28. Belief in which a mixture of soot is covered in dark liquid. (9)
29. Nocturnal affair which ends with the morning. (5)

DOWN

1. An artist studies a piece of furniture. (9)
2. Bump boat. (5)
3. Having a constant attachment makes a man of our times use the telephone. (8)
4. Historical periods seen in their wider aspects. (4)
5. Time when a tree gets spoilt in a battle. (5,5)
6. Doing wrong makes one colour. (6)
7. Dance since lots of oarsmen love me. (9)
8. Old man in evil place. (5)
13. Arrogant claim that there is nothing bad to be rewritten in an author. (5,5)
15. Waylay as bud came out. (9)
17. Teach same material in Tony's place. (4,5)
18. What helps one to see inside a crib is destroyed. (8)
21 The man inside the embraces is a victorious captain. (6)
22. Coin named after sovereign. (5)
24. Resign having lost the redhead or join up again. (5)
25. Guard intelligence. (4)

SETSQUARE

Apologies for the bad printing last week which caused many of the numbers to drop out of the Crossword 1396 grid. Special congratulations to solvers of this puzzle for their perseverance!

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The officer will have responsibility for monitoring, and involvement in, the regular collection and analysis of data arising from the work of the Housing Aid/Homelessness Service and undertaking research on particular issues arising out of the work of this section as required by the Homelessness Officer.
Applicants should have experience of housing and/or research work, and knowledge of the provision of housing and social legislation would be an advantage.
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CITY OF Liverpool

Application forms returnable by 29 April 1983 may be obtained from the Director of Housing, P.O. Box 43, Personnel Section, Foster House, Canning Place, Liverpool L69 1HX by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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Application forms and conditions of employment can be obtained from: **The Administrative and Personnel Officer, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London, SE17 1JT, and should be returned by no later than Friday, 29 April, 1983.**

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Application forms from: **the Graduate Secretary, School of Law, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL.**

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LISTINGS

THURS 14 APR

LONDON 'Know your rights' meeting of claimants, advisers & trade unionists to discuss ways of improving the take-up of welfare benefits. 7pm Caxton Hall, SW1 (St James's Park tube). **Org Cities of London & Westminster Trades Council.**

FRI 15 APR

LONDON Red Rope (socialist walking & climbing club) grand disco. Bar & raffle. 8pm-1am The Factory, Matthias Road, N16. Adm £1.75 waged/75p unwaged. **Details: Joyce 01-889 9106.**

SAT 16 APR

LONDON The Poverty of Politics: what future for the poor? Day conf. 10-5pm ULU, Malet Street, WC1. Adm £7.50 waged/£1.50 unwaged. Creche. **Org CPAG 01-242 3225.**

LONDON Over our dead bodies: women against the bomb. Spkrs incl Angela Carter, Julie Christie, Jill Craigie, Greenham Common Women, Harriet Harman, Sheila Rowbotham, Joan Ruddock, Jill Tweedie, Fay Weldon, Susannah York. 3.30-7.30pm Central Hall, Westminster SW1. Adm £1/50p unwaged. Children free. Open to men, women & children.

LONDON GLC Nuclear Bunker Party. With Disband; special guests Jim Barclay, Sunwind, Spartacus R. 7.30pm Langdon Park Community Centre, Byron Street, E14. Adm £1.50/unwaged 50p (with UB40). **Details: Ken Hulme 01-633 7060.**

SUN 17 APR

LONDON Evening of solidarity with the people of Turkey. Workshops + showing of film 'The Herd'. Spkrs. 5-11pm Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, E2 (Bethnal Green tube). Adm £1/75p. **Org Tower Hamlets Trades Council.**

LONDON GLC Nuclear Bunker Party. With Disband; special guests 14 Karat Soul (from NY). 7.30pm Rio Cinema, 107 Kingsland Road, E8. Adm £2/£1 unwaged (with UB40).

MON 18 APR

LONDON for 6 weeks. Radical change in the 80s – course on new directions in work and relationships. Mondays 1-3pm Hammersmith Unemployed Workers Centre, 446 Uxbridge Road, London, W12. Free. Org through WEA. **Details: Jocelyn Chaplin 01-743 8124.**

TUES 19 APR

LEICESTER Alternative defence. Talk by Michael Randel. 7.30pm Friends Meeting House, Queens Road. **Org Leicester CND 0533-57228.**

LONDON for 8 weeks. The People's London: an alternative history. Andrew Davies. 7pm Working Men's College, Crowndale Road, NW1 (Mornington Crescent tube). **01-387 2037.**

LONDON for 8 weeks. Latin America: lands of violence? A discussion of the causes of unrest in Latin America. 7pm Working Men's College, Crowndale Road, NW1 (Mornington Crescent tube). **01-387 2037.**

LONDON Karl Marx – what is the relevance of his ideas today? Spkr Martin Jacques. Public meeting. All welcome. 8pm St Anne's Hall, Venn Street, Clapham (Clapham Common tube). **Org Clapham Communist Party.**

BRIXTON 'Greenham women defy the state' public forum. 7.30pm Lambeth Town Hall. **Org South London Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!**

WED 20 APR

HAMPSTEAD Educating for peace. Spkrs Hilary & George Lipkin (Teachers for Peace) & James McCarthy (Peace Pledge Union). All welcome. Adm free. 8pm Friends Meeting House, 120 Heath Street, NW3. **Org Hampstead CND.**

THURS 21 APR

LONDON for 6 weeks. Sexuality and subjectivity in feminist politics. Tutors: Barbara Taylor, Sally Alexander. Thursdays 6.30-8.30pm Extra-Mural Centre, 32 Tavistock Square, WC1. Fee £6 waged/£2 unwaged. **Org ULU Dept of Extra-Mural Studies 01-636 8000 Ext 3850.**

LONDON Opening party for See Red Women's Workshop exhibition (7 years of women's posters). 6-8.30pm Cockpit Gallery, Princeton Street, WC1. **Details: Sandy Bailey 01-405 5334.**

GLASGOW 'The General Strike in Scotland'. Spkr Ian MacDougall. 7pm Star Club, 44 Carlton Place. All welcome. **Org Communist Party History Group.**

EALING CND Group meeting. Spkr Chris Collier: 'Personal experiences of a CND member'. 7.30pm St Andrew's United Reform Church Hall, Mount Park Road, W5. All CND members welcome. **Org Ealing CND.**

FORTHCOMING

22-24 APR Salisbury Friends and Allies weekend conf for community artists and workers in related fields. St Edmunds Arts Centre, Bedwin Street. Creche. Adm £7.50. **Org Association of Community Artists. Details: Marion Rose 01-722 5686.**

23 APR Exeter CND spring fair. St George's Hall, Market Street. Free. **Org Exeter CND. Details: 0392-59935.**

23 APR London Day conference: Disarm for development – wishful thinking or urgent necessity? Spkr Inga Thorsson, former Swedish Ambassador to UN. Adm £3/£1.50 unwaged. 9.30-4.30pm, Friends House, Euston Road, NW1. **Org UNA 01-930 2931.**

23 APR Suffolk Grand Benefit Evening with John Williams, Neil Innes, Roger McGough. 7.30pm Snape Maltings Concert Hall. Tickets £3.50-£5.50. **Org East Anglian Alliance Against Nuclear Power 0473-214308.**

23 APR Liverpool 'A Woman's Place': Northwest Regional Socialist-Feminist Conference on Women & Housing. Day conf. Friends Meeting House, Paradise Street, Liverpool 1. Adm £1/£1.50 waged; 50p unwaged. Creche. Women only. **Details: Sue 051-709 1462 or Dot 051-708 5844.**

28 APR London School governors, councillors and the politics of schooling. Seminar & discn led by Rosemary Deem. 5.30-7pm. Room C12, Kings College, The Strand, WC2. **Org Politics, Education and Society Seminar Group c/o 01-836 5454 Ext 2325.**

29 APR Manchester 'Unemployment and Labour's plan for jobs'. Spkrs: Gerald Kaufman MP & Frances Done. 8pm Withington Town Hall, Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury. **Org Withington CLP.**

3 MAY East Finchley 'The Galaxy's Guide to Survival' – the facts and folly of the nuclear arms race. Presented by Fall-out Theatre. 7.30pm Methodist Church Hall, High Road, N12. Adm free. All welcome. **Org East Finchley CND/CRS London Region 01-555 7313.**

13-15 MAY Hastings Marxism and Britain 1883-1983. Residential weekend course. **Org WEA, SE District, 4 Castle Hill, Rochester, Kent. Medway 42140.**

14 MAY London Making jobs. Conf on new North London employment initiative. Poly of North London. **Details: CAITS 01-607 7079.**

14 MAY Oxford Conference: New thinking on employment. Ruskin College. **Org SERA/Socialist Society. Details: 01-439 3749.**

14 MAY Rhondda Festival for Peace. Starts 2pm Penrhys Community Centre. **Org Rhondda CND. Details: Jill Evans 0443-434232.**

14-15 MAY Edinburgh Marx Centenary Weekend. Spkrs incl Bea Campbell, Tricia Davis, George Kerevan, Doug Bain. 60, The Pleasance. Adm £1 per day/£1.50 weekend.

20-22 MAY Tiverton Westland Revel – weekend of folk, peace & workshops. Proceeds to Exeter CND. **Details: 0392-59935.**

21 MAY London Popular planning for social need. For trade union activists. 10-4.30pm County Hall, SE1. **Details: CAITS 01-607 7079.**

21-22 MAY Bradford Women's Local History Weekend conf on themes peace & war; maternity & reproduction; politics & parties. £6.50 waged/£3 unwaged. Creche. **Enquiries: Adult Education Centre, Bradford 487054.**

24 MAY International Women's Day for Disarmament – women's day of action and strike for disarmament. **Contact Carmel, May 24, 16 Arundel Road, Brighton 0273-504265.**

28 MAY Manchester CND, Trade Unions & the Workplace day conf. 10.30-4pm, Manchester Town Hall. Creche. **Org Trade Union Coordinating Committee, Manchester CND 061-682 9334.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
From 21 April 'THE ROARING GIRL' by Middleton & Dekker (runs 3¼hrs). THE PIT – from 22 April 'THE BODY' by Nick Darke.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'Lorenzaccio', 'The Rivals'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'Way Upstream', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'Small Change', 'The Beggar's Opera', 'Kick for Touch'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 lines) CC. Group sales 01-379 6061. The Wells' Stagecoach. Phone B.O. for details.
15 & 16 April eves 7.30, Sat. mat. 2.30. Last three perfs JOYCE TRISLER DANSCOMPANY (NY). From 26 April SANKAY JUKU 'SPRING INTO DANCE'. Phone 01-278 0855 (24 hours) for details of amazing cheap ticket offers!

UNITY THEATRE presents 'Come Fry with Me' an anti-nuclear entertainment. Hampstead Theatre, NW3, 18-20 April 8 p.m. Seats £2, £1 (UB40). Details: 01-486 7743.

THEATRE GOERS *please note:* cc – Credit cards; S – Student standby.

Meetings

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE. Sunday talks on eastern thought and spirituality in London and Bourne End. All welcome. Vedanta magazine 50p. Details: Tel. 06285 26464.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk, Sunday, 17 April, 8 p.m. 'Dangers of Hypnotism'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Groups

WEEKLY EXPERIENTIAL group for writers, poets, visual artists, musicians. Enquiries to: The Creative Process, Mary Ward Centre, Queen Square, London WC1, or ring 01-387 1816.

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Conferences

WOMEN WORKING WORLDWIDE
A conference for women on the garment, textile and electronics multinational industries. Speakers from Britain and the Third World. Sunday 24 April, 10.30-5.30. GLC County Hall, London SE1. Contact Helen or Gerry, War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7. 01-609 0211.

Poetry

GEOFFREY HILL reads 'The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy' to launch the poem's publication by Agenda Editions/Andre Deutsch. Fri. 22 April 7.30 p.m. Poetry Society, 21 Earls Court Square, London SW5.

OUTPOSTS POETRY QUARTERLY. Poems invited for future issues and/or annual Poetry Competition (to celebrate **OUTPOSTS'** 40th anniversary in 1983, prizes will total £3,000). For details send s.a.e. to: 72 Burwood Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 4AL.

Concerts

QUILAPAYUN IN CONCERT FOR CHILE Solidarity Campaign. **PORTSMOUTH** 29 April, Guild Hall, (0705) 824355. **LONDON** with **BOYS OF THE LOUGH,** 1 May, Dominion Theatre, 01-580 9562. **BISTOL** 3 May, University Victoria Rooms. **SHEFFIELD** 4 May, City Hall, (0742) 735296. All tour details and tickets for London concert from C.S.C., 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7. 01-272 4298.

Publications

BOOKS (new, secondhand, English, Foreign), magazines, records. Refreshments while you browse, 11-7 daily including Sundays. Book-world, Islington Green. Quote this ad for 10%.

RADICAL SCOTLAND, recently launched bi-monthly magazine for socialist debate in Scotland; April/May issue now available in progressive bookshops with George Galloway and Duncan Campbell. Subscription £5 (6 issues) from: 1 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LW.

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion Street, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822.

SOVIET RUSSIA catalogues available. A. C. Hall, 30 Staines Road, Twickenham TW2 5AH.

Financial

IMMEDIATE ADVANCES £100-£25,000. Written terms on request. Regional Trust Ltd, 31 Dover Street, London W1A 4RT. 01-491 2934.

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WARM, HUMOROUS, reasonable looking male, 31, seeks female to share with. Interests include: movies, jazz, good food, conversation, pubs, countryside, etc. London. Box 5808.

WELL SPOKEN, travelled, London man, 60, seeks travel minded, mature, interesting woman. Box 5771.

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